

# WEDDING CUSTOMS AROUND THE WORLD



# EUROPEAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ In France, only civil weddings are legally recognized they are performed in the town hall by the mayor (or a deputy mayor or another councillor acting on his/her behalf). Once the ceremony is complete, the couple will receive a *livret de famille*, a booklet where a copy of the marriage certificate is recorded. This is an official document and is free of charge.

Traditionally, the wedding guests gathered at the fiancée home and went on procession to the church. Nowadays, the guests usually gathered at the town hall or church and the bride and bridegroom enter together, followed by the family and guests. At the reception, the couple customarily uses a toasting cup called a *Coupe de Mariage*. The origin of giving this toast began in France, when a small piece of toast was literally dropped into the couple's wine to ensure a healthy life. The couple would lift their glass to "a toast", as is common in Western culture today. Some couples choose to serve a croquembouche instead of a wedding cake.

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In some parts of Italy, a party, is thrown outside of the bride's home by the groom. The groom then sings to his bride to further seduce her. Once his song is sung, the party ends. It is also traditional for the groom's family to give a dowry to the bride and to provide the engagement ring. The bride's family is then responsible for receiving the guests of the wedding in their home for a reception afterwards. The color green is very important in the Italian wedding, it brings good luck to the married couple.

An old Roman custom was that brides threw nuts at rejected suitors as they left the ceremony.

After dessert, more dancing commences, gifts are given, and the guests eventually begin to leave. In Southern Italy, as the guests leave, they hand envelopes of money to the bride and groom, who return the gift with a wedding favor or bomboniere, a small token of appreciation.

# EUROPEAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ In Greece, one day before the wedding,, the groom cannot see the bride until the wedding ceremony. The groom usually arrives first in church and waits for bride, who usually arrives late. After they exchange flower bouquets, they have the wedding ceremony, where the best man puts the wedding rings and crowns on the couple. At the end of the wedding ceremony, as the newly wedded pair leaves the church, the guests throw rice and flowers for fertility and felicity.

After the ceremony, usually the couple hold a great wedding party. It starts with the invited people waiting for the couple, who usually come after some time. They start the dancing and eat a piece of their wedding cake. At some point during the party, they also dance the traditional zeibekiko. A typical Greek wedding will usually have more than 100 invited people (but usually 250-500). There are many other traditions which are local to their regional areas. One famous tradition is the pinning of money on the bride's dress.

# ASIAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ In India, weddings take anywhere from five minutes to several days. In certain regions, it is quite common that during the traditional wedding days, there would be a tilak ceremony (where the groom is anointed on his forehead), a ceremony for adorning the bride's hand and feet with henna (called *mehendi*) accompanied by *Ladies' Sangeet* and many other pre-wedding ceremonies. Another important ceremony followed in certain areas is the "Haldi" program where the bride and the groom are anointed with turmeric paste. All the close relatives make sure that they have anointed the couple with turmeric.

After the solemnization of marriage, the bride departs with her husband. This is a very sad event for the bride's relatives because traditionally she is supposed to permanently "break-off" her relations with her blood relatives to join her husband's family. Among Christians in the state of Kerala, the bridegroom departs with the bride's family. The wedding may be followed by a "reception" by the groom's parents at the groom's place. While gifts and money to the couple are commonly given, the traditional dowry from the bride's parents to the couple is now officially forbidden by law.

# ASIAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ In China, traditional marriage is a ceremonial ritual within Chinese societies that involve a marriage established by pre-arrangement between families. Within the traditional Chinese culture, romantic love was allowed, and monogamy was the norm for most ordinary citizens. A band of musicians with gongs and double-reed instruments accompanies the bridal parade to the groom's home. Similar music is also played at the wedding banquet. Depending on the region from which the bride hails, Chinese weddings will have different traditions such as the Tea Ceremony or the use of a wedding emcee.

Most regional Chinese wedding rituals follow the main Chinese wedding traditions, although some rituals are particular to the peoples of the southern China region. In most southern Chinese weddings, the bride price is based on the groom's economic status. The idea of "selling the daughter" or bride is not a phrase that is used often. Therefore, the price of the bride does not tend to be too demanding. Most of the time, the bride price is in the form of gold jewelry, fine fabric, money, or even a roast pig, which symbolizes that the bride is a virgin. Wedding presents are given by elderly couples, while tea is served by the younger family members.

# ASIAN CUSTOMS



. In Japan customs fall into two categories: traditional Shinto ceremonies, and modern Western-style ceremonies. In either case, the couple must first be legally married by filing for marriage at their local government office, and the official documentation must be produced in order for the ceremony to be. Before ever getting married there are two types of mate selection that may occur with the couple: (1) miai, or an arranged marriage and (2) ren ai, or a love match.<sup>[16]</sup> The Japanese bride-to-be may be painted pure white from head to toe, visibly declaring her maiden status to the gods. Two choices of headgear exist.

Traditional Japanese wedding customs (shinzen shiki) involve an elaborate ceremony held at a Shinto shrine. Japanese weddings are being increasingly extravagant with all the elaborate details placed into thought. However, in some cases, younger generations choose to abandon the formal ways by having a "no host party" for a wedding.<sup>[17]</sup> In this situation, the guests include mainly of the couple's friends who pay an attendance fee.

# AFRICAN CUSTOMS



- ✦ In Ethiopia the Wedding procedure starts with the groom's side sending elders who then request a union between the parties. The elders discuss a dowry and the wedding is announced and the families begin preparations for a church ceremony. On the wedding day the groom and groomsmen get ready at the groom's house early in the morning and proceed to the bride's parents house to begin the wedding ceremonies.

As the groom and his wedding party arrive, the bride's family and friends ceremonially block the entrance to the house. The bride's family and friends ceremonially block the entrance to the house. The groomsmen have to either serenade or bribe their way into the house so that the groom can take the bride with him. After the religious ceremony, the wedding procession moves to a park/garden where lunch is served to guests.

# AFRICAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ In Kikuyu, marriage proceedings often begin with the man proposing to the woman. Upon her acceptance the man then calls for a meeting with his clan elders who largely consist of extended elderly family members. A delegation carrying small gifts is then sent to the woman's home to meet with her clan elders. Deliberations on bride price actually begin on a later date and these are strictly conducted by the older men only. Upon completion of these negotiations, a wedding date is set, with the elders having provided an acceptable percentage of the full dowry.

The rest of the dowry is expected later. No request is made for it, but the young man is expected to remember to finish his payment and failure to do so spells dishonor for that family.

The wedding day begins with a convoy from the grooms family that heads to the girl's home to collect her. However, the convoy is not immediately let into the girl's homestead. Rather the bride's gate is locked and song and dance begins as a cover for negotiations. Various goods may be asked of the groom and he willingly obliges to the demands after which he is let into the compound.

# AFRICAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ Generally, there are three types of weddings in Nigeria: traditional weddings, church weddings and court weddings. The civil marriage takes place at a registry, and then the religious ceremony follows. Finally it's the traditional Nigerian wedding ceremony. Many couples choose to do all three, depending on their financial situation. Nigerian weddings are normally characterised by lots of colours.
- ✘ In traditional weddings, customs vary slightly from one part of Nigeria to the other. In Western parts it is called the engagement ceremony.

Officials and elders sip wine while they invite the couple in for introductions and negotiations, and presentation of the bride price which consists mainly of gifts of shoes, textiles, jewelry and bags.

In Eastern parts of the country it is very much the same. Elders from both families retreat into an inner room to negotiate on the bride price. When concluded, the gifts are then presented to the bride's family. After this, the bride, along with her entourage of girls is presented to the husband, family and guests

# LATIN AMERICAN CUSTOMS



- ✘ Bridesmaids and groomsmen are chosen months before the time of the wedding. Those selected consist of couples paired off at the altar, usually three men and three women for the brides side and more three men and three women for the grooms side. The groom arrives at the wedding ceremony location first. The bride comes to the location, usually a church, at least 10 minutes after the groom's arrival. The two should not see each other before the ceremony, however, as it is believed this will bring bad luck.

Brazilian wedding ceremonies normally follow Christian traditions closely. The bride and groom recite wedding vows to each other after a prayer is read. Then the bride and groom exchange wedding rings. These rings are usually engraved with the name of the groom on the bride's ring and the name of the bride on the groom's ring.

After the religious ceremony, the newlyweds usually throw a big party where they receive the compliments from all the guests. The party usually happens in a different place, a private party house that in Brazil is called a "ceremonial." A lot of singing and dancing goes on usually after the couple dances a Waltz. The Brazilian culture is very rich with its numerous traditions, celebrations, and in many cases superstitions.

# AMERICAN CUSTOMS



- × Most weddings in the United States follow a similar pattern to an English wedding. The host sends invitations to the wedding guests, usually one to two months before the wedding. A color scheme is selected by some to match everything from bridesmaids' dresses, flowers, invitations, and decorations, though there is no necessity in doing so. The groom's friends throw a party for the groom, called a "bachelor party". It usually involves alcohol and racy entertainment.

A wedding ceremony may take place anywhere, but often a church, courthouse, or outdoor venue is selected. American brides usually wear a white, off-white, silver, or other very light-colored dress. White seeds, or confetti is sometimes thrown at the newlyweds as they leave the ceremony to symbolize fertility. Drinks, snacks, or perhaps a full meal, especially at long receptions, are served while the guests and wedding party mingle. In a symbolic cutting of the wedding cake, the couple may jointly hold a cake knife and cut the first pieces of the wedding cake, which they feed to each other. If dancing is offered, the newlyweds first dance together briefly. Sometimes a further protocol is followed, wherein each dances next with a parent, and then possibly with other members of the wedding party.

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✘ Project about wedding customs in English class  
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