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## Planning A Rehearsal Dinner

By James Mahony

The following article presents the very latest information on weddings. If you have a particular interest in weddings, then this informative article is required reading.

The rehearsal dinner is one element of the wedding planning that can be confusing for the future bride and groom. Questions such as do we really have to have a rehearsal dinner, what do we do at the rehearsal dinner, who pays for the rehearsal dinner, who is invited to the rehearsal dinner and do we have to invite out of town guests are planning questions that remain unanswered for many couples. While the rehearsal dinner may just seem like another expense and another task that needs to be completed, it's important to not skip out on this wonderful opportunity to get together with close friends and family members for a night of relaxation in a casual atmosphere before the wedding. This article is intended to answer some of the questions surrounding the planning of a rehearsal dinner and to provide the couple with some necessary information to help them plan a successful rehearsal dinner.

While a rehearsal dinner is not necessary, it is a good opportunity to get together with close friends and family members to thank them all for their participation and assistance during the planning of the wedding as well as their participation in the actual wedding itself. The rehearsal dinner gives the couple the chance to extend their thanks to everyone who has been involved with the wedding planning or who has simply supported them in their efforts. The rehearsal dinner can also be the opportunity to relax and unwind before the wedding. The couple is able to put aside their concerns over their upcoming nuptials and enjoy the time with family and friends. The rehearsal dinner has become a common tradition in weddings but the couple is not obligated to host a rehearsal dinner if they choose not to do so.

The typical activities involved in a rehearsal dinner include meeting at the site of the ceremony to run through the logistics of the ceremony and then gathering at a particular location, a restaurant, catering hall or even a friend's house, to enjoy a meal together. During the dinner the couple usually takes the opportunity to thank all their guests for their love and support and may choose to honor their wedding party with gifts at this time. There are also usually a series of informal toasts at the rehearsal dinner. The parents of the couple will also usually thank the guests and offer a toast to the couple. Any of the guests at the rehearsal dinner are also free to offer a toast or a few words of wisdom to the couple.

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While the wedding is shrouded in traditions and expectations, the rehearsal dinner is typically a relaxed atmosphere with no set agendas.

If you don't have accurate details regarding weddings, then you might make a bad choice on the subject. Don't let that happen: keep reading.

The subject of who pays for the rehearsal dinner is another confusing topic. Tradition holds that the parents of the groom assume the financial responsibility of the rehearsal dinner but more and more couples are opting to bear the burden of the rehearsal dinner on their own. There are a couple of factors that are contributing to this changing trend. First the medium ages of couples getting married is on the rise and couples who marry at a later age are typically more financially established and capable of affording to finance the rehearsal dinner themselves. In addition the responsibility of paying for the rehearsal dinner is typically accompanied by the responsibility of planning the rehearsal dinner and many couples are unwilling to relinquish the planning responsibilities. The couple wants to ensure that

the rehearsal dinner reflects their personalities and tastes and therefore assumes all responsibilities for planning the rehearsal dinner.

Although the original intent for the rehearsal dinner was to include those who are actively involved in the ceremony, the couple is free to invite any other guests that they choose to join them in the rehearsal dinner. The rehearsal dinner is an opportunity for the couple to thank everyone who has supported them throughout their wedding planning and also to just relax and have a good time with friends and family outside of the formality that often surrounds a wedding. With this in mind it is appropriate to invite anyone that you want to share in this sentiment. The couple may also wish to include out of town guest in the rehearsal dinner in order to thank them for making the trip to be with them on their wedding day. While including out of town guests is a wonderful gesture, it is important to understand that the couple is not obligated to do so. If it would be too financially cumbersome to include all of the out of town guests, the couple could consider hosting a smaller event such as an evening of drinks and appetizers for this larger group. Although everyone participating in the ceremony should be included in the rehearsal dinner the guest list is not restricted to these individuals and the couple can choose to include anyone they wish.

Planning a rehearsal dinner can seem daunting as the rules are not clearly defined but it is this flexibility that makes planning a rehearsal dinner such a fun challenge. From the invitation list to the activities the couple is under no obligations to adhere to any strict guidelines in planning their rehearsal dinner. Although planning a rehearsal dinner is not obligatory, many couples opt to do so because it is such a wonderful opportunity to thank their loved ones for their continued support. That's how things stand right now. Keep in mind that any subject can change over time, so be sure you keep up with the latest wedding news.

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### **Unique Wedding Favors Everyone Can Appreciate**

**By Debbie Jones**

Include a touch of gratitude in your wedding plans with unique wedding favors. Whether at the rehearsal dinner or wedding reception, wedding favors can add a nice touch to the celebration. And best of all, these keepsakes show your appreciation to those who are closest to you. The old adage "It's the thought that counts" couldn't be truer. Whether selecting gifts for the bridesmaids, the groomsmen, or for anyone you wish to honor, it's the thought that counts: Not the expense. There are ideal wedding favors to meet every budget big and small.

The bride can select from a variety of wedding favors that her ladies will cherish for years to come. In fact, shopping for the bridal party can be a lot of fun by capturing their personalities. From compact mirrors and antique jewelry boxes to pink leather hip flasks, or a silver plated tea set for the flower girl, there truly is something for everyone. The idea here is to personalize the gift with each recipient in mind.

Keep the groom involved. There are several traditional favorites as well as from some new and unique ones. Traditional wedding favorites include monogrammed hip flasks and barware, cuff links to match their tuxedos, and sterling silver knives and cigar accessories. Some unique ideas that might capture their particular personality include deluxe poker sets and personalized baseball bats and engraved luggage tags. The ring bearer might like the grown-up gifts, but he might also appreciate the silver plated planes, trains, and motorcycle piggy banks designed just for kids.

For parents, grandparents, the host and anyone else you'd like to recognize at the rehearsal dinner, any keepsake is appropriate. The main focus should be on personalizing the keepsake in two ways. First, engrave the recipient's monogram or wedding date onto the gift. Second, select gifts that match the recipient's personality.

First, there is a wedding rehearsal where the presiding officer instructs the wedding party on wedding-day etiquette. After the rehearsal, usually held in the evening on a weekday, everyone gathers at a restaurant, a home, or anywhere they'd like to meet for the rehearsal dinner. The bride and groom's wedding party, close family, out-of-town-guests, and friends all attend. This is the perfect time to hand out gifts.

It's customary for all the ladies in the bridal party to receive a gift. It's also an opportunity for the bride to give them luxury items and trinkets. The bride needs to set the matron-of-honor apart by giving her a unique wedding favor. The bridesmaids traditionally receive identical gifts. And the flower girl, often needing a little encouragement herself, should get something especially chosen just for her.

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The groom thanks his party in a similar way. The best man deserves something extra for all his hard work. The groomsmen can receive identical gifts, but this is not mandatory. And the ring bearer, less mature in years from the rest of the men, might like something chosen just for him.

The bride and groom may wish to extend their gratitude to the host of the rehearsal dinner and other close family members. The rehearsal dinner is ideal time to do so. And there are several unique wedding favors that will serve this purpose well.

Wedding favors at the reception can carry a particular theme throughout the party. If your reception will take place around the holidays, decorated wine bags or place settings can be a stunning visual. A heart theme around Valentine's Day might be animated with red, pink, and white candles, hearts, and flowers.

Beach themes can add a lot of fun to the party. With picture frames that look like wooden beach chairs or with sailboat candles at each place setting, the vibrant colors of a beach theme can really liven up the reception in a memorable way.

Wedding themes help focus the planning process. And with the vast array of unique wedding favors available, the couple can reflect their own personality in the theme and favors they choose.

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