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Wedding Cake – Bakery Tips

By Zorana Durkovic

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Planning a wedding may be very stressful, so the best thing to do to help it is to do everything you can in advance.

Same stands for the wedding cake.
Where to start?

Lets see together:

Have an idea of how many guests you will have at your reception, this will help determine the amount of wedding cake you will need or number of cupcake wedding cakes.

The pastry chef/cake decorator may ask how many invitations are being sent to how many people and how many are from out of town or from more than a certain number of miles away.

The pastry chef/cake decorator will use this information to calculate how many people will actually show up at the reception and how many of those will actually eat a piece or more of cake.

By this time several people, such as the minister and caterer, will have asked for this information. They will have calculated and told you how many people they think will actually attend your wedding and reception.

You will have been appalled at the low number they came up with. You know that everyone you invite is waiting breathlessly to attend your wedding and that only those who are ill or incapacitated or on Moon will pass up the chance to wish you well in person on your big day. When the baker comes up with a similar number, believe him because it's true.

Many people will simply forget and others can think of no way worse to spend a summer Saturday than at another wedding. That's just the way it is. And you can believe it and save some money, or you can believe that everyone will come and then have to decide what to do with the leftover cake.

Wedding Cake – Bakery Tips

Do whatever will do the most to put your mind at ease for the next six to eight months. Saving money by ordering only a sufficient amount of cake based on the years of experience of your baker is no good if you are going to fret over it and be nervous about it for more than half a year.

Sleeping well, feeling good and setting your mind at ease before your big day is a lot more important than saving money and having no leftovers. You will have enough to go crazy with as your wedding approaches.

When in wedding cake bakery, be clear about the date, time, and location of the wedding and receptions; set deadlines for changes to the cake design and size and for delivery; provide the address of and a map to the reception.

Make sure that the cake can be delivered at a time convenient to you or whomever you will have to receive and inspect the cake.

There should be a written contract with the wedding cake bakery to specify the size, shape, flavor, color, decorations, delivery day, delivery time, delivery place, and price of wedding cake.

Such a contract, of course, does not need a special form or a lawyer to draw it up. It can be a simple list with this information. The list should be dated and signed by both the baker and you, and you should each have a copy.

Many wedding cake bakeries have their own form for such orders because it is as important to them that you remember exactly what you asked for and don't remember asking for something that you never mentioned as it is to you that they deliver what you did ask for.

If they have their form, use it and add any items or information that you need to. Make sure you take a copy of their form.

Bring swatches of material to match the cake to your wedding colors because colors in pictures are often slightly off and a picture's colors can fade with time. (But again, don't forget the picture of the wedding cake.)

Below you will find list of questions you should ask the pastry chef, baker, or cake decorator at the wedding cake bakery. It is your special day you have every right to ask questions!

Questions to ask at the bakery:

(Suggestion: print these questions, you will certainly need them)!

1. Can pastry chef/cake decorator create custom cake from your instructions and to look like your wedding–cake picture.
2. What flavors of wedding cake and icing are available? Or if you already have an idea what you want, ask "Can you make a (type of cake) with (flavor of icing)?"

Wedding Cake – Bakery Tips

3. Ask to sample some of the bakery's cakes. If you don't care for any of the cake samples offered by the bakery, ask for additional samples or as what other choices are available.

Even if you have to order a small cake to try the baker's version of what you want, it is a small price to pay for satisfaction.

4. In case you want to use fresh flowers to decorate the wedding cake, ask if the bakery can provide them or if you or a florist must deliver them.

5. Request to see pictures of wedding cakes from their photo gallery. Take a look at their album and see if you like the looks of the cakes. Ask how old the pictures are and if the person who baked and decorated these cakes is the same person who will create yours.

6. Does the bakery, baker, pastry chef, or cake decorator has the required licenses and has passed health inspections. Licensing varies from state to state, but a bakery is probably required to be licensed

as a retail food establishment or as a food preparer.

The health department of the city, county, or state probably issues licenses. The baker, pastry chef, and decorator may also be required to be licensed or qualified as a food handler.

You can go to most states' web sites and find out just what licensing is required so that you know what to ask for.

Most bakeries will gladly let you look at the kitchen to see where the cake will be mixed, baked, decorated, and stored; this is probably as satisfying as seeing the licenses.

You should probably ask to take a peek at the kitchen after asking about the licenses. You can also ask to see the results of the latest health inspection.

7. If you simply don't like frozen food and don't want it served at your wedding, ask if the wedding cake will be frozen. But understand that some people believe the taste of several cakes improves after freezing.

8. Ask how long before the wedding date the cakes will be prepared and how they will be kept until time for delivery. If you think the time or the method of storage will result in the bridal cake not being as fresh as you want, express your feeling to the person you are talking with.

He or she either will explain or demonstrate that this will not be a problem or will negotiate a shorter length of storage. She may let you sample some cake kept for that length of time. Some cakes keep well when frozen, and others do not.

Pound cakes and some carrot cakes seem to improve with freezing. If you are not satisfied and cannot reach some agreement, you must use another bakery.

Wedding Cake – Bakery Tips

9. To find how much time and attention will be spent on your cake, ask how many orders the bakery typically has for the weekend of your order and how many of those your pastry chef might be producing.

A large volume can be an indication that not a lot of time and attention can be devoted to your cake. But a very busy bakery also indicates that many people like its products and trusts its work. Wedding cake bakery that no one likes will have plenty of time to dedicate to your cake, but that alone will not guarantee good results.

Neither will a very busy bakery guarantee good results all the time. For one, you may need to check with them during the week of production to make sure that things are going well.

For the other, you may want to check to make sure that your order has not somehow been overlooked among so many orders. In either case verify that your cake is in the process of being prepared.

10. Ask if the decorator is experienced and good and if he or she decorated the cakes pictured in the bakery's gallery.

The point of such a question is to find out whether you will be getting the best the bakery has to offer and whether you will be served by the same personnel that did the work seen in the bakery's photo

album and for the references you will contact.

You may be satisfied that all decoration is supervised by a master decorator with long experience and excellent references, even though the actual work may be done by one of several less experienced decorators.

11. Ask to be introduced to each of the people who will bake, decorate, and deliver the cake. You may have questions you want to ask. If you do, ask them.

For example, you might be concerned with the experience each one has. If so, you might ask how many cakes they have baked or decorated. I might be more concerned to simply ask whether they did the cakes in the bakery's album of cakes.

If you have no questions, ask to meet them anyway. Introduce yourself and try to make it easy for them to remember your name and your face. Show a great pleasure at meeting the people who have created the wonderful masterpieces that have come from this bakery and tell them that you look forward to having them create your wedding cake.

What you are creating is a personal relationship with these artists at the wedding cake bakery. Like all workers and artists, these people like being appreciated and will do their best work for someone who has praised them and treats them as a master of their craft.

This goes as well for the person taking your order, whether it is the owner, manager, or just the order taker. I suggest that you work to make as good an impression on them as you expect them to try to

Wedding Cake – Bakery Tips

make on you. Dress well when you are shopping for a bakery.

You don't have to dress like you're meeting the Queen or the First Lady, but don't be dressing like you're about to be hitting the bars with your friends on your bachelorette party—not unless you dress a lot better for that than most of the young women in my neighborhood.

Please try to time your visits so that the bakery is not crowded with customers. This is particularly important in smaller bakeries.

12. If you are concerned, ask whether the cake be made from scratch or from packaged mixes. Packaged mixes are so much more expensive that few busy bakeries would use them. And if they produce the wedding cake you want and it tastes good, do you care whether it's from a mix or from scratch?

13. Ask what the price will be. If the baker can give you an estimate but not the final cost, ask how much the final cost might vary from the estimate.

If the baker says that they will charge by how long it takes because they charge by the hour, ask how many hours it will take and do the calculation yourself.

Again, if it's an estimate of hours, ask how far the hours might vary from that estimate. If you feel uncomfortable with the bakery's commitment to giving you a number, maybe you should find another bakery.

14. Ask for customer references so that you can talk to with them. Then actually contact them and ask about their experience with the bakery.

While they were probably very pleased with the bakery (otherwise you'd think the bakery would not be giving them as a reference), they may give you some pointers about how best to deal with the bakery.

15. Request a written proposal that includes the size of the cake, the flavor, the icing type and flavor, the description of the cake: Number of tiers or number of cupcakes or miniature cakes, decorations, the date and time the cake would be ready, whether it would be delivered and where and when, and the price.

Some bakeries will put all of this in a proposal and some will commit to just the basic items. Press for commitment to everything that is important to you.

I hope this article helped you, so go ahead print it and save for the "bakery day"!

All the best!

If you need wedding cake ideas or pictures, supplies, bakery directory ...meet me at:

Wedding Cake Toppers: Important Things To Know

By Melissa Burton

Wedding cake toppers have long been the traditional symbol of married couples as they were symbolically placed above the wedding cake for everybody to see.

Wedding cake toppers are available in a wide array of designs, colors, and styles wherein couples can choose whatever they think would best portray their marriage.

So, for those who want to know some tips regarding the right way to choose wedding cake toppers, here are some tips that you may use:

1. Never use wedding cake toppers that are made of plastics, especially the cheap ones.

Even if you are tight on a budget, it is best not to choose wedding cake toppers that are made of plastics. Usually, these are the ones that are readily available in the department stores.

Wedding cake toppers should be as exceptional as your wedding cake. Therefore, it is best to use wedding cake toppers that is out of ordinary and never before seen in any wedding. This may cost a little bit more than what you have intended to spend with but would definitely convert your wedding cake into something wonderful, one that would definitely make your wedding truly a memorable event.

2. Be creative.

It is best if the wedding along with your wedding cake and cake toppers are all personalized. This means that the designs and styles are creatively made by the couple. This will add more romance and glamour on the wedding itself.

Best of all, do not be constrained with the traditional and classical designs of wedding cake toppers. You may deviate from the customs and have your very own wedding cake toppers.

Today, there are many contemporary designs that the couple may use. In fact, they can even have their own ideas. All they have to do is to ask their baker to make the concept and use it as their wedding cake topper.

3. For the budget conscious couple, you can use your parent's wedding cake topper if it is still available. This will truly make your wedding cake very special because of the hand-down generation.

The point is, whatever designs or styles of cake toppers you choose to have on your wedding cake, the fact that it symbolizes your marriage is already a special concept that no other item can replace.

Wedding cake toppers are not just sheer embellishments in a cake but more of an emblem, one that best represents the love that is flowing in the hearts of the couple.

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