

## A Celebration of Times Past: Planning a Vintage Wedding

In 1840, the pageantry of the American wedding took off, thanks to England's Queen Victoria, who quickly captivated onlookers around the world. She had thrown one of the most elaborate weddings the world had ever seen up to that time, and it was only natural for her contemporaries to emulate her. Weddings soon became events for everyone to enjoy and were no longer limited to just the couple and their families. They were extravagant celebrations of love, life, and happiness. Before Victoria, weddings were simpler affairs. The sweet strains of Lohengrin were soon overpowered by DJs and bands, and beautiful, handmade nose-gays were eclipsed by bursting, colorful bouquets, among other things. For today's bride, toning down what's already an over-the-top affair is made appealing with the resurgence of the vintage wedding, a nod to nuptials of the past. Yet, there are multiple avenues to take when considering a vintage wedding theme; fortunately, there are also countless websites and books devoted to the subject. As with anything, you can take inspiration from the past and carefully intertwine it with modern ambience to create a blend of old and new, or you can host a blowout vintage wedding bash that replicates the past to a T. The choices are endless! Refining the Vintage Wedding Theme

**Dress/Accessories:** Finding the perfect dress is the goal of every bride. For those hoping to wear a vintage wedding gown to their ceremony, the search can be somewhat more complicated. If you live in a large metropolitan city, there are likely quite a few vintage clothing or consignment stores that you can check out. Online browsing/shopping is always a good alternative, and if you do purchase anything, your local tailor can easily handle most alteration needs. You can also opt for modern wedding dresses that have vintage vibes, such as mermaid or trumpet styles. Though, of course, when the elegant Grace Kelly married Prince Rainier in 1956, she chose a beautiful, full-skirted gown in ivory. The point here is to stick with flowing, high quality fabrics and classic embellishments that keep with the vintage wedding theme. As far as shoes, jewelry, and veils, many of these items are also available online, either in their original vintage form or as modern reproductions. Your mother or grandmother may even have some pieces lying around that you can use to round out the vintage wedding theme. Music: Undoubtedly, there are bands in your area that specialize in old-time hits or, at the very least, jazz standards. Some larger cities might even have mock big bands that can perform at your reception. There are a couple ways you can go about this: consider having the band greet guests on the lawn, in the style of an old garden party, or create a faux bandstand at the front of the reception venue to feature the band in all its glory. To get guests excited about the wedding theme, before the band comes on, have a victrola or phonograph that you've rented or purchased piping music throughout the reception venue. It will set the stage for the coming attractions!

**Food:** Weddings in the past have traditionally been sit-down dinners, though you don't have to follow this when planning a vintage wedding. Offerings weren't nearly as diversified as today, and the usual fare consisted of various meats, salads, and fruits. Occasionally, brides also held pot-lucks, a way to get everyone involved in the festivities. Selecting your menu can certainly play off these more traditional choices, but you can also mix and match. Pair old favorites with some new choices, and be creative! In terms of the cake, the flavor of choice was always buttercream. Obviously, white cake is still the reigning champ of wedding cakes, but if you decide to go with chocolate, red velvet, or the like, you can have your cake decorated with vintage flair - pearls, beads, feathers, lace, and other trimmings that meld with your wedding theme. Pictures: As with your music, finding a photographer who specializes in snapping pictures with an 'old-timey' feel is not necessarily vital, but a consideration in your search. Certainly, the photographer can take pictures as usual, and revise certain elements when he's back at his studio. Perhaps you'd like black and white or sepia-toned pictures - that's doable. Maybe you want a crackled finish - sure. Get to know your photographer and his capabilities! Look at portfolios before hiring anyone, and you're sure to find a photographer who can carry out your wishes for great 'vintage' wedding pictures. Lighting: The right light is important for any wedding! Regardless of the time of day your reception takes place, the lighting you choose should foster both warmth and invitation. Elaborate chandeliers, candles housed in extravagant candelabras, and other sources of ambient light are ideal for a vintage wedding theme. Warm up reception tables with centerpieces surrounded by candles, or purchase multiple mini-chandeliers and hang them around the appetizer tables, gift tables, or in the bathrooms. Milk-glass lanterns/lamps were also a popular choice of lighting; they provide a soft glow that's unequalled. A New Take on the Classics A vintage wedding theme allows you and your guests to re-discover the beauty and elegance of the past. However you choose to incorporate these elements into your vintage wedding, just remember -- have fun! From birdcage veils and quaint petit-fours to jazz standards and a 1940s getaway vehicle, there are multiple ways to make the ceremony and reception unique to you. Plus, a vintage wedding theme can be a lot of fun for everyone involved! They're a great way to re-invent the past, learn a little history, and infuse your ceremony and reception with some wonderful, old-fashioned glamour.

### About the Author

Cherie Johnson is the founder and owner of Creative Wedding Favors, the premier site for personalized, unique anniversary, baby and bridal shower, graduation, quinceañera, and [wedding favors](#). Cherie's advice and party favors have helped countless friends, couples, and families make their big events a success. Cherie's wedding ideas have also benefited readers of many websites including Women Of, Wedding Lenox, and The Wedding Guide. Before she established her company in 2006, Cherie worked as a professional wedding photographer, capturing the most special moments of the bride and groom's nuptials. For more information on Creative Wedding Favors or to find a variety of colorful, customizable gifts and favors, please visit [www.CreativeWeddingFavors.com](http://www.CreativeWeddingFavors.com).