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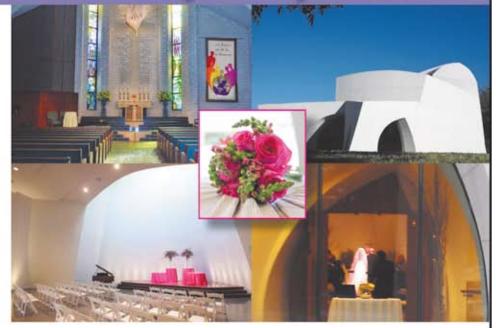
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Above left: The Cathedral's Sanctuary. **Above right:** Interfaith Peace Chapel exterior. **Lower left and right:** The Interfaith Peace Chapel interior features newly improved acoustics.



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Someone asked "Will you marry me?" And someone said, "I will."

Now what?

Well, now, the planning starts. You can easily find a wide variety of wedding planning calendars all over the Internet, and most if not all suggest that you start planning at least a year out from the wedding date you choose.

12 Months Out:

First things first: announce your engagement and set your date, at least 12 months out. Work out your basic budget, then start researching venues and vendors — florists, photographers/videographers, DJs/bands, etc. — to find the ones that that will fit in your budget, and that want to work with same-sex couples. That's where this directory comes in handy. We designed it specifically for that purpose. Start reviewing portfolios and setting up meetings with prospective vendors; quality is at least as important as price.

You also need to decide how many guests — more or less — that you will invite. That figures into the budget, too, you know.

11 Months Out:

Choose and book your caterer. If you are having entertainment at the reception — a DJ or a band, for example — choose them and book them now, too, as well as the photographer you want. The good ones go fast.

Decide on the music you want for your ceremony. Choose your florist. Choose your venue, negotiate your contract and put down the necessary deposit. Good venues, like good vendors, go fast.

Meet with your officiant to start planning the details of the ceremony. If you are having a religious, church-based wedding, some churches require that couples go through counseling sessions with the pastor prior to the wedding.

Send the save the date cards.

10 Months Out:

For female couples, if one or both will be wearing wedding dresses, now is the time to choose and order those dresses. And start talking with your attendants — groomsmen, maids of honor — about their duties

9 Months Out:

Register for wedding gifts. Decide on food and liquor for the reception. Order all the wedding attire accessories.

8 Months Out:

Go in for first gown fittings, if necessary. If there are bridesmaids, get their dresses ordered.

7 Months Out:

Start talking about attire for bridegrooms, groomsmen and finding the right formal wear store. Order your invitations, table cards and thank-you cards.



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6 Months Out:

Get serious about planning your honeymoon. Review and approve proofs for invitations, etc.

5 Months Out:

Start with the cake tastings and choose a baker. Order your cake and arrange for delivery. Reserve the location for your rehearsal dinner and choose your menu.

4 Months Out:

Get those invitations addressed. Write or choose your wedding vows. Purchase or make arrangements to rent tuxedos for the bridegroom(s) and groomsmen. Make honeymoon reservations and pay deposits.

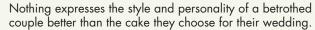
2 Months Out:

Send out the invitations. Get the final fitting for wedding dresses/tuxedos. If you plan on having a pre-nuptial agreement, now's the time to get that signed. Buy gifts for attendants and family members, and buy all the ceremony accessories, like candles and wine glasses.



Have your cake and eat it too

By Tammye Nash



So for something that is such a vital part of your big day, it's important that you get the cake just right.

But how do you do that?

You start with a budget and a guest list, because wedding cake size and cost is determined by the number of people it's expected to feed, and most bakers charge by the slice.

Cost varies based on the type of cake you want, the baker you choose and even on geographic region. According to The Bridal Association of America, the average cost of a wedding cake is \$543, with the low end of the price range standing at about \$1.50 a slice. Mid-range cost is \$5-\$6 a slice. If you really want to go all out on the cake, expect to pay \$10-plus a slice.

Decorations also play a part in the cost. Fresh flowers are one of the most inexpensive ways to decorate a cake. Fondant adds to the cost, as do special fillings and more elaborate hand-made sugar or fondant decorations.

And don't forget about those extra costs, like a delivery fee. MarthaStewartWeddings.com says ideally you should order your cake about six months before the wedding day, so you



need to start thinking about what you want well before then. Think about the style and theme of your wedding. Think about the flavors of cake you like best. Look at magazines and websites for ideas.

Should you have a traditional wedding cake, white with all those tiers and flowers? Or something whimsical and cute? Maybe you don't want a single cake at all, but two or three smaller cakes, or even cupcakes?

It all depends on what you want.

Start by choosing a baker. Ask around. Read reviews. Set appointments and go in for tastings. Look at the work each baker has done before. Does their style match yours? Can they meet any of the special needs you might have, like accommodating food allergies or creating special flavors or designs?

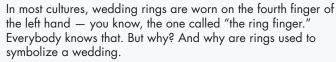
Here are the big questions: Can they give you what you want, when you want it and for a price within your budget? Find the baker that is the best answer to all those questions and when you do, book 'em!

Yes, there are traditions when it comes to wedding cakes. But remember, it's your wedding, your special day. What matters is that the cake makes you happy.



One ring to bind them

By Tammye Nash



According to TodaylFoundOut.com, no one knows for sure where and when the wedding ring tradition really first started. But some say it started some 4,800 years ago in Egypt, where sedges, rushes and reeds were picked and twisted into rings and other ornamental items for women to wear.

A circle is a symbol of eternity, and the circular wedding ring symbolizes eternal love. Those ancient rings of sedges and rushes deteriorated easily, and so were replaced with rings of more durable materials. And to the ancient Egyptians, rings of more precious material signified deeper, more lasting love.

The Romans eventually adopted the Egyptian custom of wedding rings, but being Romans, they turned what had been a symbol of eternal love into a symbol of ownership: They "claimed" their woman by giving them a ring.

Christians adopted the custom of wedding rings in about 860 A.D. While at first they used ornately engraved rings, the church discouraged such vanity and the ornate rings were



eventually replaced with simple, plain bands.

The tradition of placing the wedding band on the fourth finger of the left hand also supposedly dates back to the ancient Romans who believed there was a vein, the "Vena Amoris," that went directly from the left hand ring finger to the heart.

Others claim the tradition dates back to an old Christian ceremony in which the priest would take the ring and, as he recited "In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost," touch the ring to the thumb, index finger and middle finger and then, as he said "amen," would slide the ring onto the fourth finger.

And then there is the practical theory: Wedding rings are often made of gold, a relatively soft metal, and the left hand is, for most people, used less and the ring there less likely to be damaged.

Today, wedding rings can be anything you want them to be. Plain gold bands or diamond-encrusted circlets of platinum. Brand new, custom made, or vintage finds, or family heirlooms.

All that matters is that you treasure them as a symbol of your love, your union.





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