

Create the Perfect Seating Plan for Your Wedding Reception

The seating arrangements for your wedding reception can be a bit of a puzzle. Here are some tips for creating the perfect seating plan for your wedding reception.

Determine the number of seats and tables.

Traditional wedding reception floor plans will have the wedding party at a long table facing the guests. Some couples prefer a separate "sweetheart table". The wedding guests usually sit at round or small tables in groups of 4-20, with an average of about 8 to 12 per table. Example; for 100 guests, you'll need approximately 8 to 12 tables depending on the floor plan of your reception site. Your reception site may be able to provide you with a pre-drawn floor plan designed with the long table facing the guest tables.

If they do not have a sketch, it's pretty simple to put one together yourself. Just draw corresponding circles and squares to represent tables. Number the tables and then you can write in names as you determine who will sit where. *Note; include the DJ set up table in your sketch.

Enlist some help in seating guests.

Talk with your parents and the groom's parents about your guests and what they may have in common. Try to place people with similar backgrounds and interests at the same table. Be sure to think about any possible uncomfortable situations such as divorced or separated parents or couples. Your reception will run much more smoothly if you do this.

Determine some common interest categories.

Your list can include factors such as ages, couples, singles, families with children, elderly family and friends, guests from far away, or co-workers.

Put guests that don't know each other together.

By mixing up friends with family, you give your guests the opportunity to have interesting conversations and to get to know people who are very close to you.

Make sure couples and families with children are seated at the same table.

Be sure to place parents and small children together. No one wants to end up babysitting other people's children at your wedding reception. Consider a kids' area with food and activities if you expect to have a number of children at your reception.



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Do a site survey with the place cards in the reception hall.

By going to the site and looking at the floor plan in person, you can make adjustments that can make your guests more comfortable. Some things to remember:

- Make sure older guests are near the food tables and restrooms.
- Let families with young children sit on the perimeter near an exit in case anyone gets restless.
- Sometimes a guest table ends up right next to one of the DJ's speakers and can be a nuisance for your guests, as well as a volume problem for the DJ during the announcements and while mixing your music.
- Talk to the wedding coordinator or banquet manager to make sure you are not overlooking anything in the floor plan arrangement.

Put the seating chart somewhere safe.

Store your seating chart in your wedding planning binder and a copy with your wedding planner/coordinator. Give a copy to anyone involved in setting up the wedding reception places and/or décor.

Tip: Consider giving your photographer and DJ a final copy of the seating chart and letting them know where your key guests are seated such as grand parents, your point person or your boss. The photographer can be sure to get a photo of them, and the DJ will know where they are seated for any special announcements or issues that may arise.

Don't stress.

With all the planning you've done, your guests should be more than accommodated. Remember, above all, your wedding day is *your day*. Have fun!



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