

Tips for Sending Wedding Invitations

There's no doubt about it. Sending invitations can be a time-consuming, emotional task, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some tips getting your invitations in the mail on time and without hassle.

Lay Some Ground Rules

Establishing a few ground rules on the invitation list can save you time and hurt feelings.

1. **Decide what family really means.** You probably don't have to invite the distant cousin your husband-to-be never sees, but make sure you state this in the beginning.
2. **Involve only the real stakeholders.** If you are receiving assistance from your family with paying for the wedding, they do have some say-so on the invitation list. Be clear about what that say-so is. Remember, the more people you involve the more complicated it gets.
3. **Decide on degrees of separation.** You need to establish a ground rule on what a "friend" really is. Remember, this is *your* day, so choose the people you *want* to be there.
4. **Be willing to compromise.** Inevitably, there will be someone you really don't want at the wedding and vice versa. The best way to deal with this is to compromise.
5. **Remember the numbers.** You probably have a limit on the number of people you can accommodate for your wedding and reception. Be sure to keep this on the forefront when you are whittling the list down.

Save the Date

Save the date cards are designed to officially announce your wedding, but they also play an important role in special wedding situations, such as in the following situations:

- **Destination wedding** – Guests of a destination wedding need as much advance notice as possible to make travel arrangements (airfare, accommodations, passports, etc.) Four to six months notice is a good rule of thumb, but for popular tourist locales, be sure to give even more notice (as much as 12 months for places like Hawaii).
- **Holidays** – If you are planning your wedding around a holiday, save the date cards are a courtesy for people who plan vacations and time off work around the holidays.
- **Long-distance travel** – If you have family and friends coming from long distances, it gives them time to make travel arrangements.
- **Wedding Party** – Save the date cards are a must for those you want to be instrumental in helping with the wedding. Again, this gives them advanced notice for travel and other arrangements.



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Save the Date Etiquette:

Save the date cards should be sent no later than four months before the wedding. Anyone who receives a save the date card gets an invitation. It's not required, but information on group hotel rates, special airfare pricing or other discount information should be included with the save the date card.

Selecting the Invitation

The invitation sets the tone for your wedding. Here are some tips for selecting your invitations:

1. **Be sure to match your invitation to the wedding.** Remember, the invitation tells the invitee how to dress, what type of gift to get and the general mood of the day. Be sure the invitation answers all of these questions for your guests.
2. **Look at the overall cost.** If you have custom invitations made, you will pay for printing, paper, embellishments, proofs, envelopes and postage. Be sure you factor the cost of all of these items into your invitation budget.
3. **Ways to save money.** Order discontinued styles. Get a graphic designer friend to design your invitation and print on photo paper. Tie on your own ribbons or other embellishments.

Addressing the Invitations

There are a few ways to get this done: handwritten, calligraphy or pre-printed. Handwritten or calligraphy are the preferred ways to address the invitations. Tips for getting them in the mail:

1. **Get the addresses early.** Addressing, stuffing and sealing invitations takes time.
2. **Enlist some help.** Addressing invitations is a great bridesmaid party idea.
3. **Use pretty postage.** Find a stamp that complements your invitation.
4. **Find a calligrapher.** Maybe you have a family member or friend who practices this handwritten art. Let that be their wedding gift to you.
5. **Get your handwriting turned into a computer font.** There's a free website called kevinandamanda.com. They specialize in converting handwriting into fonts. You can also download hundreds of handwritten fonts at their website if you want to "print" your invitations.



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Some Invitation Hints

- Do not put a name on the return address. Just put the address, city, state and ZIP code.
- Do not use abbreviations other than non-professional titles (Mr., Mrs., Ms., Jr., etc.)
- Spell out professional titles (Doctor, Judge, Reverend, etc.)
- Address the outside envelope to the family or person you are inviting.
- Be more specific on the inner envelope. For instance, if you do not want single friends or relatives to bring a guest, put just the individual's name on the inner envelope.
- Never include registry information in the invitation. The same goes for "no gifts." Let family and friends spread the word or put this information on your wedding website.
- Include directions in your invitation for the ceremony and reception locations.
- Put RSVP instructions with a phone number and e-mail address on the invitation or on an insert inside the invitation.



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