

FACTFILES

Weddings



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With Audio

OXFORD BOOKWORMS

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP, United Kingdom
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First published 2011

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ISBN: 978 0 19 478727 7

A complete recording of *Weddings* is available in a CD Pack ISBN: 978 0 19
478726 0

Printed in China

Word count (main text): 5,865

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1 A long time ago

Everybody loves a wedding. It is a happy day, a day for blue skies and flowers, for family and friends, for music and dance. Some weddings are very small, with just five or six people, and other weddings cost thousands of dollars and have hundreds of people. But in every wedding there are two very important people – the bride (the woman) and the groom (the man). For them the wedding is when their new life begins.

When was the first wedding? Nobody knows, of course. But there were weddings in Egypt thousands of years ago. In some ways they were like weddings today. The Egyptian man and woman got engaged before they got married. The groom and his parents visited the bride and her family, and gave them money. The groom gave a present to his bride too; often it was something made of gold. At the wedding there was lots of food, and people sang and danced.

Long ago in Rome, the father of the bride looked for a groom for her, but often his daughter found her man first! Then the fathers of the bride and the groom arranged things between them. The bride needed to be twelve years old or more and a groom thirteen or more before they could get married. On the day of the wedding, the bride wore a long

white dress, and had flowers in her hair. A *pronuba* – a married woman friend, often the mother of the bride – went with her and stood next to her at the ceremony. Friends and family came to the wedding, and the family needed ten Roman men as witnesses. After the ceremony, there was a party at the new home of the bride and groom, and people gave them presents.



A Roman wedding

Later in western countries a wedding was a day for the families of the bride and groom. Sometimes the father of the bride looked for the best groom for his daughter, or the bride's family got help from a matchmaker; this person met different young men and found the right groom for the bride. After that the two families arranged the wedding together

and the wedding happened at the bride's house, not at a church. Here, the bride and the groom got married in front of everybody. In the 1500s the wedding moved to the church, and there was a ceremony.

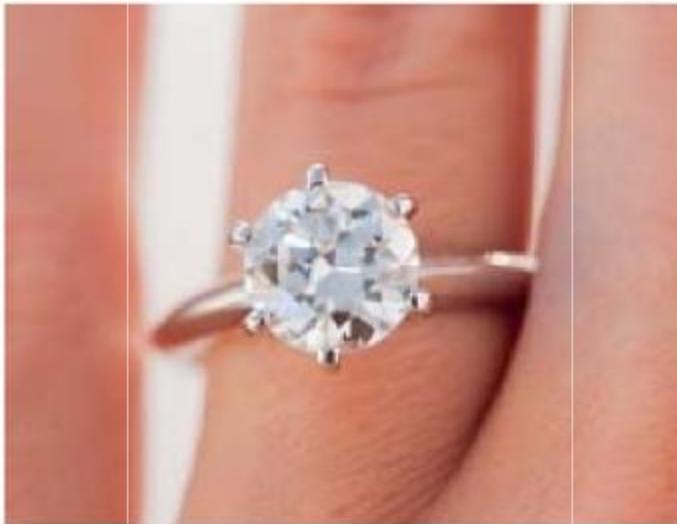
Today in western countries – like the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and many European countries – weddings often have a lot of the same things. For example, the bride wears a white (and often expensive) dress, and carries beautiful flowers. She usually has helpers with her too – friends or perhaps younger girls (and sometimes boys) from the family. In this book we are going to call a wedding like this a 'western wedding'.

Weddings change over time, and different countries and churches all have their own traditions. Weddings often have things like music or dance from long ago, but they have new things from today too. People sometimes put together different parts of other wedding traditions: a Japanese bride wears an American dress, or a Brazilian bride has a French wedding cake. And as you can see in the next chapters, people in countries a long way from each other often do the same things for the same reason.

2 Before the wedding

A woman finds a man; a man finds a woman. Perhaps they meet at work, at a party, or through friends. Perhaps a matchmaker helps them, or their families arrange the wedding. When a man asks a woman to marry him, he proposes. Of course, the woman can ask the man to marry her. In some countries Leap Day – 29 February – is the day for this. When the woman – or the man – says yes, the couple are engaged.

In western countries this is called an engagement. In the photo you can see Prince William of Wales and Catherine (Kate) Middleton in London on the day of their engagement. At the same time as the engagement, or soon after, the groom often gives the bride a ring (called an engagement ring).



A diamond engagement ring

Where does the tradition of the engagement ring come from? Archduke Maximilian of Austria gave a ring with a diamond to Mary of Burgundy in 1477. This was the first engagement ring with a diamond, some people say, and a diamond ring is popular today.

The gimmel ring was popular in Germany, England, and

other countries in the 1500s and 1600s. There were two parts to this ring. When they got engaged, the man wore one part, and the woman wore the other part. Then when they got married, the two rings went together and made one ring, the woman's wedding ring. You can buy special rings like these today.

Sometimes the groom has an engagement ring too. In Germany, the bride and groom give each other gold rings. Before the wedding these go on the left hand, and then they go on the right hand, and are wedding rings. In Brazil, the groom gives the bride a ring for her right hand, and at the wedding it goes on her left hand. In China, some brides wear a ring with jade. This brings them good luck.



A gimmel ring

At the time of the engagement, there are often presents. Sometimes they are between the bride and groom, and sometimes between the two families. In some countries the groom's family gives money – called the bride price – to the bride's family, because the bride is leaving them.

In Indonesia, a groom from a Chinese family gives clothes, gold, and money to the bride and her parents. They look at the presents and give half of them back. This says to the groom, 'This is very good of you. But we cannot take all these

presents from you.' In Hawaii, the groom's family once gave doors, windows, and all the things for a house, and the bride's family made the house. Engagement presents can be lots of different things: chickens in Zaire, flowers called *zdravets* in Bulgaria, and of course cars, money, houses, and gold.

After the engagement, and before the wedding, the bride often has a party with her women friends called a hen night or bachelorette party. It is their last time together before the bride leaves them to be a married woman. It is a time to talk, laugh, and perhaps dance together – and sometimes to make a lot of noise too! When the groom goes out with his friends like this, it is called a stag night or bachelor party.



In Hawaii and other parts of the USA, some brides make 1,000 little birds from paper. They do this in the time between the engagement and the wedding. This tradition comes from Japan, and it brings good luck and a long, happy life to the couple. The little birds – often white, red, or gold – are sometimes made into a big picture for the couple's new home. In the years to come they can look back at the picture and remember their wedding.



Little white and gold paper birds

3 Clothes and people

What colour does a bride wear at her wedding? White, of course – but also other colours like red, gold, or black!

Most brides at western weddings wear a white dress, but it was not always like this. Two hundred years ago, rich British brides wore expensive new dresses for the wedding, and other brides wore their best dress. Blue was a popular colour, but red and black were not. Everything changed in 1840 at the wedding of the British Queen Victoria to Prince Albert. Victoria wore a white dress, and had white orange blossom – flowers from the orange tree – in her hair. White dresses were soon very popular, and a lot of brides wear long white dresses today.

Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at their wedding

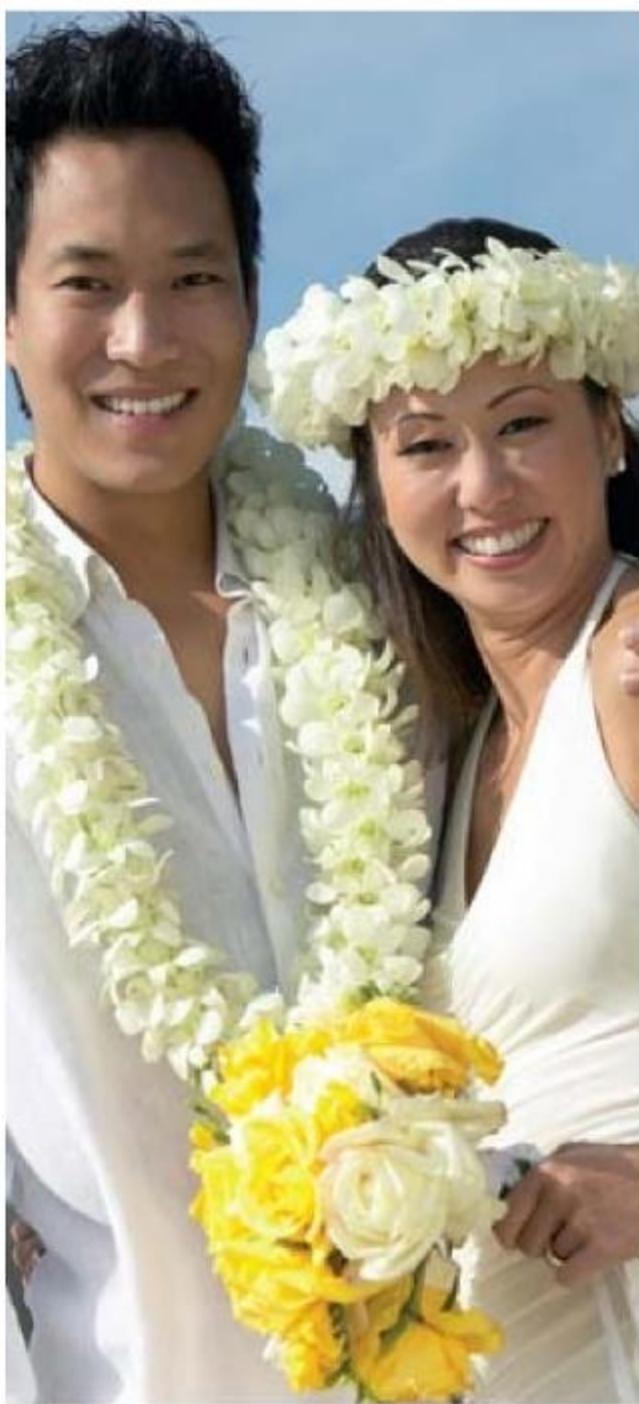


A Korean bride and groom



The next most popular colour around the world is red. It is a lucky colour for brides in China and India. In India and Sri Lanka women sometimes wear beautiful clothes with gold in them too. And a traditional Spanish bride wears an expensive black wedding dress.

Many brides wear a veil. This goes over the bride's head and face, and is often white. In some African countries, the bride has a 'veil' of hair over her face. Brides in India and China often wear a red veil. In a western wedding, after the bride and groom are married, the groom takes the veil off the bride's face.



A Hawaiian bride and groom

What colour clothes does the groom wear? Usually the answer is a black or dark suit – but not always. In Hawaii the groom wears a long white shirt and trousers. At a traditional Korean wedding, the groom wears red or blue, with a tall black hat. In Spain, the bride traditionally embroidered a beautiful shirt and gave it to the groom. He wore this new shirt at his wedding.

The Roman bride had her *pronuba* to help her, and today's bride has helpers too. These are the bridesmaids. Usually they are friends of the bride, or sisters of the bride or groom. A married bridesmaid is called a matron of honour, and a very young bridesmaid is called a flower girl. Young boy helpers are called page boys. The bridesmaids stay with the bride before and during the wedding. They help her to put on her clothes and to remember everything. In earlier times, the bridesmaids and the bride wore the same dresses and veils. When evil spirits came near the wedding, they could not find the bride because the dresses were all the same.

The groom's helpers are called groomsmen, and they help him before and at the wedding. The most important groomsman is the best man – usually the groom's brother or his best friend. The best man stays with the groom, carries the rings, and is a witness. In some countries the best man is an older man, often a married man. He helps the bride and groom in their new life too, not just on the day of the wedding.

A bride with her helpers



4 Traditional ceremonies

It is the day of the wedding. Family and friends come together for the ceremony. There are lots of different ceremonies, of course, but some things happen all over the world.

In a traditional western wedding the groom, the families, and all the other guests come to the church first and wait there for the bride. The groom doesn't usually see the bride on the morning of the wedding or the night before because it is bad luck.

The bride and her bridesmaids arrive at the church together – often in a big expensive car. Then some music begins to play and the bride walks slowly into the church with her father.

In the ceremony the father 'gives' the bride to the groom, and the bride leaves her family and makes a new family with the groom. The wedding officiant asks the man, 'Do you take this woman to be your wife?' He answers, 'I do.' The officiant then asks the woman, 'Do you take this man to be your husband?' And she answers, 'I do.'

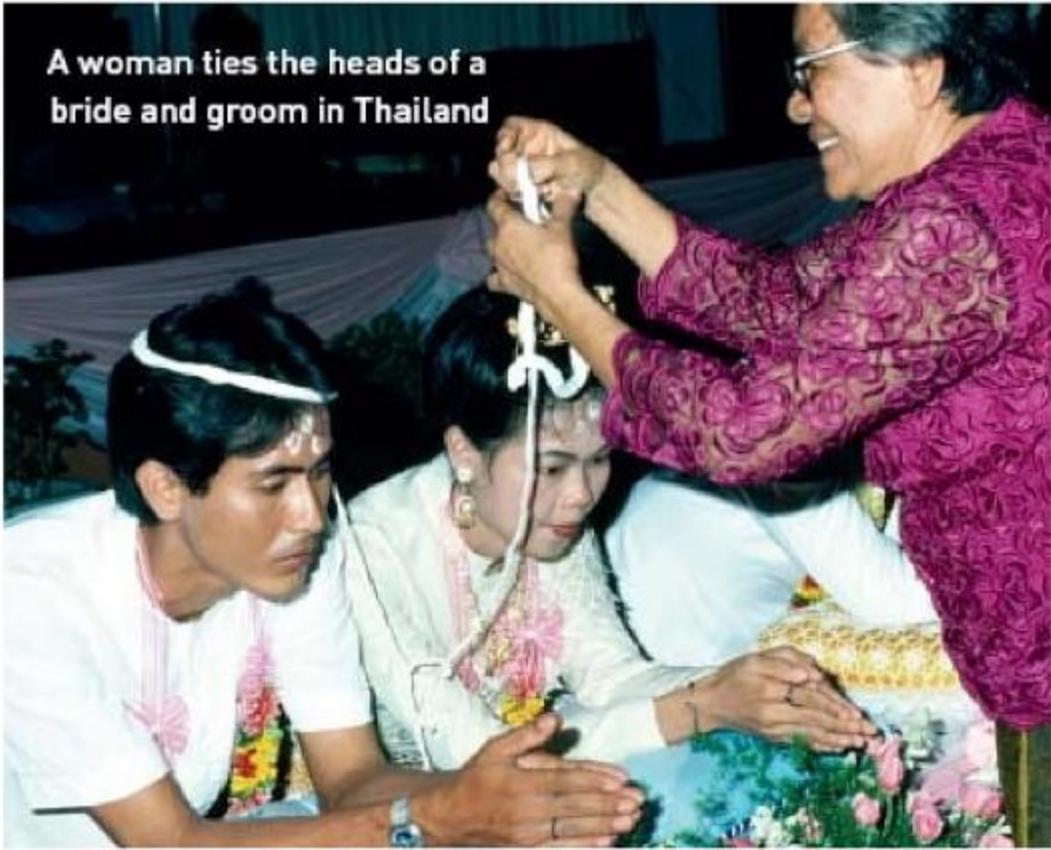
In many ceremonies around the world the couple drink from the same cup. In China, the bride and groom drink wine from special cups. Then they give the cups to each other and

drink again. In Bulgaria and Russia, the couple drink three times from the same glass, and in France they have wine from a very beautiful cup – a *coupe de mariage*. This special cup stays in the family for many years. In Japan, the bride and groom have a drink called *sake*. The groom drinks first, then the bride, and then the parents of the couple drink too.



A drink for the groom in Sri Lanka

A woman ties the heads of a bride and groom in Thailand



Because the bride and groom are beginning a new life together, in many countries someone ties the couple together. In a Hindu ceremony a white thread goes around the couple five times. In Cambodia, every guest carefully ties a thread around the couple's hands, and in Thailand, two white threads go between the heads of the bride and groom. The Hopi people of Arizona, in the USA, cut some hair from the bride and some from the groom. They then tie the hair together and the couple are married.

Gold wedding rings



In many countries rings are a very important part of the ceremony. Sometimes only the bride gets a ring, and sometimes the bride and the groom have a wedding ring. But of course, rings aren't a new thing – thousands of years ago Egyptian grooms gave a ring to their brides, and the Romans had wedding rings too.

In some traditional ceremonies, the man or the woman breaks something. At a Jewish wedding, the groom breaks a glass with his foot; this brings good luck. In Bulgaria, the bride quickly throws a plate to the ground. When the plate breaks, it gives the couple good luck too.

In many countries, the bride and groom write their names in a special book, and the witnesses write their names too. In a Muslim wedding, the bride and groom put their names on a special paper called the *Nikaahnama*.

In a western wedding the couple write their names in the special book near the end of the ceremony. Then music plays and the newly married husband and wife leave the ceremony together with their friends and families.

5 The reception

After the ceremony, people love a good party. This is often called a reception. In Mexico and Italy it sometimes goes on all night, and in Russia it can go on for two days. A traditional wedding in Morocco goes on for a lot longer – perhaps a week!

A French
croquembouche



Special food is usually an important part of the reception. In China and Japan red food is popular, because red is a lucky colour. But the most important food in many countries is a wedding cake. A western wedding cake is usually white, with flowers and a little bride and groom on it. Sometimes the couple put one part of the cake in a box for later. They eat it a year after their wedding, or when they have a baby. In France couples have a *croquembouche*. This is made from a lot of little cakes, and it can be one metre high!

In other countries there is special wedding bread. In the

Ukraine it is called a *korovai*. Seven women make this bread in the home of the bride. It has two little birds on it (one for the bride, and one for the groom), and the sun, flowers, and animals. People often take photographs of the bride and the groom when they cut the beautiful cake or bread; it is an important part of the wedding.

At some time in the wedding reception, somebody makes a speech – they stand up and talk to everyone. In a western wedding the best man and the groom usually speak – but sometimes the bride speaks too. They talk about the bride and groom, and say thank you to the couple's family and friends. At the end they ask for good luck for the bride and groom in their new life. At a Japanese wedding, some guests make speeches too. They speak about the happy couple and everyone laughs a lot. After the speeches at a Russian wedding, the guests all throw their glasses on the ground. This brings good luck to the new husband and wife.



At the reception there is usually a lot of music and dancing. Often the bride and groom have the first dance, and then the other guests begin to dance too. Sometimes there are very famous dances with traditional music. In Greece and Bulgaria people dance in a big circle at weddings. This is very popular at Jewish receptions too – in part of this dance the bride and groom sit on chairs and the other guests carry them around the room.

Often before the bride leaves the reception, she throws her wonderful flowers to all the other young women at the party. When one woman gets the bouquet in her hands, she is going to be the next bride, people say.

A bride throws her bouquet



6 Money

Weddings can cost a lot of money. A traditional wedding in the UK costs between £15,000 and £25,000. The most expensive thing is usually the reception – about 21 per cent of the cost – and next is the honeymoon (the bride and groom's holiday), at 18 per cent. The bride's dress, shoes, hair, and other things cost about 8 per cent.

Who pays for the wedding? Usually, the bride's parents do this. But sometimes the couple pay for some or all of the wedding. In Italy the bride carries a small bag, and guests put money into it. This money helps to pay for the wedding. In Poland, young men put money on the bride's dress at the reception, and then she dances with them. People put money on the couple in Greece and Turkey too. The money pays for part of the honeymoon or for nice things in their new life together. A tradition in Hungary and Portugal is to leave money in the bride's shoe. Someone carries the shoe around to all the guests, and they put money in it for the couple.



In some countries the groom gives money as a present. In China, the groom gives money in red envelopes to the bride's friends on the day of the wedding, because he is 'taking her away' from her friends. Later, the bride gives tea to everyone in the groom's family, and they give her red envelopes with money in them.

In Spain, Mexico, and some other countries the groom gives the bride thirteen gold coins called *arras* at the end of the wedding ceremony. The groom often brings the coins in an expensive *arras* box. He gives them to the bride one at a time. Now all of his things are her things too.

As we saw earlier, in many countries the groom gives money to the bride's family when the couple get engaged. People can give this money – the 'bride price' – at the time of the wedding too. But it is not only money. The bride price can be gold, animals, clothes, and food. This happens today in countries like Pakistan and Uganda. At a Muslim wedding the groom must pay some money, called *mahr*, to the bride.



You can pay a little money for a wedding or a lot of money – but you can pay millions and millions of dollars too! The two sons of the rich Indian man Subrata Roy got married in 2004 in Lucknow in the north of India. More than 10,000 guests came to the wedding. Mr Roy brought 100 people from the UK to play music at the wedding, and 1,800 people made the food. There was Indian, Chinese, Italian, and Lebanese food.

7 Two weddings

This chapter is about two weddings in two different countries. The first wedding was in England. Graham and Kendra got married in London, in summer 2009. They are English, but they met in Bosnia in 2005.

‘I proposed to Kendra there in February 2009. On a mountain in the snow!’ said Graham. ‘I gave her a ring and other presents, and we went out to dinner that evening.’

‘We then began to get ready for the wedding,’ said Kendra. ‘We wanted to get married at my church. This was All Souls Church, a beautiful old building on Regent Street in London. The day of the wedding was 18 July, in the summer. It was a good time for the wedding, because a lot of people have a holiday at that time of year.’



“Two weeks before the wedding, I had a wonderful “hen day” with my friends,’ laughed Kendra. ‘I remember it very well. We all met in Regents Park in London and stayed there for the day. Graham and his friends went to Bath in the west of England for his stag night. They had a nice dinner and some drinks together.’

‘Then the day of the wedding arrived. It was a warm Saturday in July,’ remembered Graham. ‘Guests came from the UK, and from Bosnia, Bulgaria, the USA, and Afghanistan too. Kendra had three bridesmaids: her sister, my sister, and a friend from Bosnia. My best man was my friend Harris, and we had six groomsmen.’



Graham and Kendra with their families and helpers

‘The colours for our wedding were dark blue and gold,’ said Kendra. ‘So the bridesmaids wore dark blue dresses, and the groomsmen all had dark blue shirts. I wore a long white dress and carried white and gold flowers.’

‘Our wedding was a traditional ceremony in the church. And after that we had a lot of photos in Regents Park. Later there was a big reception with dinner and speeches. We then went to Italy by plane for our honeymoon. We had a week by the sea near the town of Pisa, and then three exciting days in Rome before we came back to England.’

‘Many of the things in the wedding were traditional,’ said Graham. ‘For example, I didn’t see Kendra on the morning of the wedding, and she wore a white dress. But some things were different. For example, we had a wedding cake but it didn’t have any flowers. Kendra and I love visiting different countries, and we have friends from all over the world, so we

had a wedding cake with a lot of flags all over it. There was a little world too with a bride and groom on it.'

The second wedding was in Japan. Eri is Japanese, and her husband Karl is British. 'We met at work in Tokyo,' said Eri. 'Karl proposed to me in July 2007 in Paris – it's famous for love, of course! When we went back to Japan, he gave me a beautiful ring, but we didn't have an engagement party.'

'Our wedding was in Kyoto, on a sunny day in April 2008,' remembered Karl. 'In spring there are beautiful flowers on many of the trees, so it was a good time for the wedding. The weather in spring is usually warm too.'



'Eri wore a traditional white *kimono*, and she had red and

yellow flowers in her hair. I wore a long black kimono. Our families came to the ceremony and some of them wore kimonos too. Most people wore black that day – it's traditional. In the evening, we had a big dinner with everybody from our two families.'

'The reception was the next day in Osaka, about 50 kilometres away,' said Eri. 'I wore a white wedding dress for this, and Karl wore a dark suit. Some of the other women wore kimonos for the reception, but most people wore dresses or suits. I didn't have any bridesmaids at the wedding or the reception. It's not traditional in Japan. Some of our guests came from other countries, like Germany and the UK.'

'At the reception we cut our wedding cake together. It was very tall – taller than us! There were a lot of speeches too, and we all laughed for a long time. Then I read a letter to my parents. In the letter I said thank you to them. I cried – and nearly everybody at the reception began to cry too!'



Karl and Eri cut the wedding cake



Eri, Karl, and guests at the reception

Like Graham and Kendra, Eri and Karl love visiting

different countries. 'People usually have pictures of flowers or animals on the table at the reception,' said Karl. 'But Eri and I visited so many countries together, so we had flags and photos from those countries on the tables. There was a flag from France, of course! Some guests gave us presents, but most gave us money. In Japan, the bride and groom give presents to their guests too, and Eri and I did this.'

'Eri and I wanted to have a honeymoon in Australia and New Zealand, but we could not go away. My family from the UK stayed for a holiday in Japan after the wedding, so we visited lots of interesting towns with them and took some wonderful photos.'

8 Destination weddings

A destination wedding (or a 'weddingmoon' – from wedding and honeymoon) is a wedding away from your home.

Traditionally, weddings often happen in the bride's town. But you can go to a different town or a different country, and these days some people do that. About one couple in six from the UK goes to a different country for their wedding, and about one couple in five in the USA has a wedding away from home.

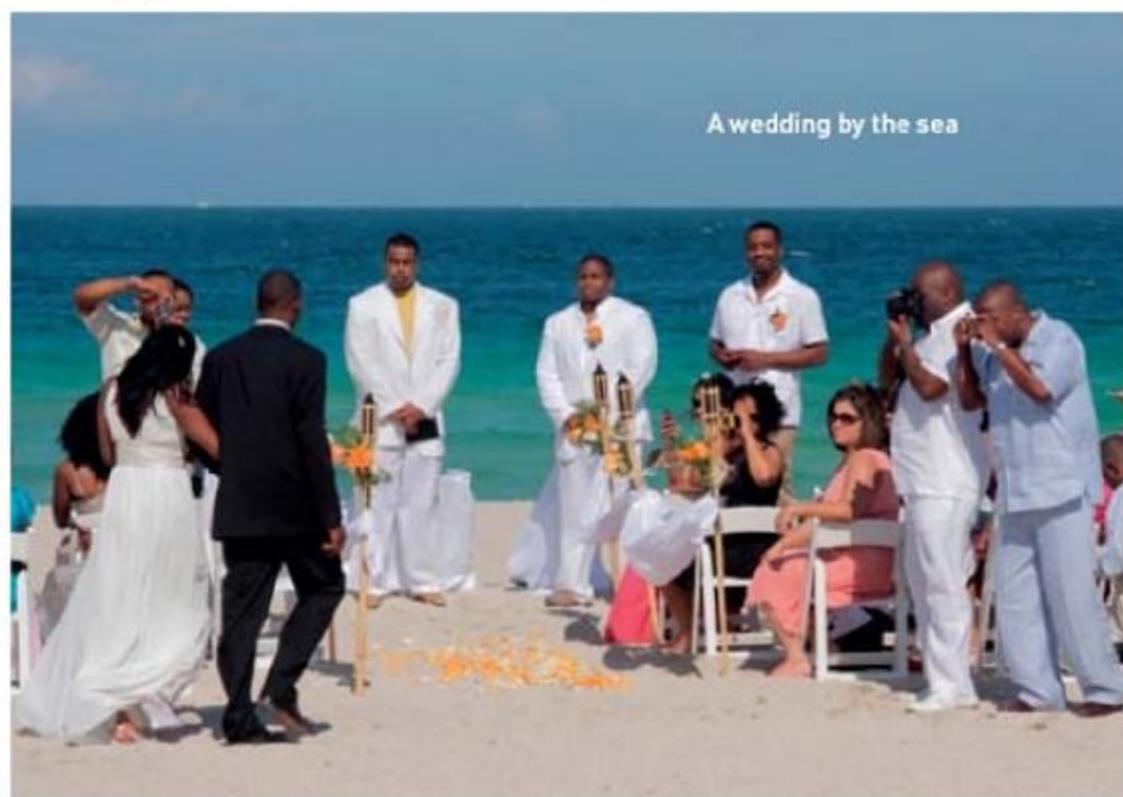
Many famous people have destination weddings. Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes had their wedding in Italy. David Beckham and Victoria Adams got married in a castle in Ireland, and Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner went to an island in the Caribbean.

Why have a destination wedding? There are many reasons. Here are some of them.

- ♥ When the bride comes from one country, and the groom from a different one, sometimes it is easier to have the wedding in a third country.
- ♥ It is unusual. Some couples do not want to be the same as their friends.
- ♥ Lots of people think differently about a wedding too.

Sometimes the bride's parents, the groom's parents, friends, brothers, and sisters all want to do different things. With a destination wedding, it is *your* wedding. Perhaps you do not want a traditional wedding, with church, flowers, and bridesmaids. A destination wedding can be a ceremony by the sea, on a mountain, in a castle; it can have thirty guests, or just six, or no guests at all.

- ♥ It can be smaller and cheaper. Of course, it is not cheaper for the guests, but it is for the bride and groom!
- ♥ Some couples from colder countries are interested in a destination wedding because they want a sunny day. So they go to a Greek island, or to the Caribbean.



In popular places like Hawaii, couples can pay for a wedding planner. This person arranges everything for the wedding – the hotel, the ceremony, the photographer, and the flowers. But when the wedding is small, the couple often

arrange the wedding without the help of a planner.

So where do people go for a destination wedding? For couples from the UK and from colder countries, weddings by the sea are very popular. They go to places like Bali, Fiji, or Barbados. Couples from Japan often go to Hawaii or perhaps France – Paris is the most famous destination there. But many beautiful old castles around France, and in other countries, are open for weddings too.



Popular destinations in the USA are San Francisco and New York. A lot of couples go to New York's Central Park for their wedding. And you can have a wedding in a castle in the USA too – in the Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland!

But the most exciting place for a destination wedding in the USA must be Las Vegas. Every day, about 315 couples have a Las Vegas wedding, and they come from all over the

world.

The special papers for a ceremony in Las Vegas are cheap – about 60 dollars. You can arrive here and easily get married on the same day too – Britney Spears did that in 2004. And of course Elvis Presley got married here in 1967. Today couples can have an Elvis wedding at the famous Graceland Chapel. ‘Elvis’ takes the bride into the building and sings during the ceremony!



'Elvis' sings
to the bride
and groom

9 Wonderful weddings

Some weddings are very different! For example, some couples get married under water. At Kradan Island in Thailand, couples come and get married under the sea on Valentine's Day, 14 February. It is the largest underwater wedding ceremony in the world. Other destinations with underwater weddings are Florida, Australia, and Hawaii.





A bride gives a ring to her groom in the sky

You can get married on a train too! The famous Royal Scotsman train can take a couple and thirty guests through the beautiful country of Scotland. The wedding *and* the reception are on the train. Or you can have a wedding in the sky. One couple got married in a plane. They then got out and quickly went down through the sky. They gave each other their rings before they got to the ground.



Or perhaps you like mountains. In California, and Colorado in the USA, and in the Rocky Mountains of Canada, you can have a mountain wedding. On a sunny day, a wedding in the snow can be beautiful – but you need good shoes for a mountain wedding!

Weddings like these can be expensive but you do not always need to pay a lot of money for a wonderful wedding. Sara Cotner and Matt Bradford got married in the mountains of Colorado, USA, in July 2008 for two thousand dollars.

‘We wanted to have a happy day,’ said Sara, ‘and to have

things made of gold,' said Matt. 'From this gold two new rings were made. We wrote the ceremony together, and we asked three of our friends to take photos.

'On the day of the wedding, lots of our friends came and made the food too,' said Sara. 'We had Mexican food and drinks. And we didn't have a traditional white wedding cake – we had six small cakes – all different! We bought them from a shop.'

'On the day of the wedding, everybody came to the ceremony,' said Matt. 'Then we had the reception, with lots of wonderful food, drink, and music. The guests talked, danced, sang, and swam! Our three friends took photos, and other people took pictures too. After the wedding, everybody sent us their photos, and we made a book of them.'

'It was a wonderful day,' said Sara, 'and we are going to remember it all our lives.'

In the end, the most important thing for a wedding is two happy people!



At Sara
and Matt's
reception

10 After the wedding

When the reception finishes, what happens next? In some countries, like Switzerland and the Czech Republic, the tradition is to put a young tree in the ground near the couple's house soon after the wedding. Two things – the couple and the young tree – begin their new life at the same time.

In many countries, someone puts a baby on the new couple's bed. And one old tradition is to throw something over the bride and groom when they leave the ceremony – flowers, for example. At western weddings people often throw confetti – very small pieces of paper in different colours. The reason for all of these things is the same: the couple's family and friends want a baby for them soon.

When the bride begins to leave with her new husband, sometimes her friends stop her. In Austria, the bride goes to church on the day after her wedding. When she comes out, her friends take her away. Then her husband must pay them money before he can have his bride back. In the Czech Republic, the guests ask, 'How much for the bride?' and her husband, of course, must pay the most. In Austria and the Czech Republic the friends take the money and buy more food and drink with it!



When you are married, the ring on your finger says to everybody, 'I have a husband' or 'I have a wife'. In some countries, other things show this too. For women, it can be a ring in the nose (in the Punjab, in India), or a flower on the left side of the head (in Hawaii).



And every year couples remember their wedding day on their wedding anniversary. In Western countries there are special presents for different years; after fifty years together, for example, you have your gold anniversary.

And for some lucky couples, there is an oak anniversary. The oak tree can live a long time – sometimes hundreds of years. And one couple, Frank and Anita Mitford from Plymouth in the south-west of England, had their oak anniversary in May 2008. They were married in 1928, so they had eighty years as a married couple. Their love was alive after all that time. So to all the brides, grooms, and newly married couples out there – good luck to you too!

paper thin material for writing or drawing on

parent a mother or father

part one of the pieces of something

party a meeting of friends, to eat, drink and dance

pay for to give money to get something

plate a round flat thing that you put food on

popular liked by a lot of people

present something that you give to somebody at a special time like a wedding or a birthday

reason why you do something

same not different

special not usual or ordinary

tea a hot drink made with the leaves of a special plant

throw to move your arm to send something through the air

together with another person

tradition something that people have done in the same way for a long time; **traditional** (*adj*)

way how you do something

western connected with places like Europe, North America or Australia

wine an alcoholic drink made from grapes

witness a person who signs a special book or paper to show that they saw a wedding ceremony

world the earth with all its countries and people

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christine Lindop was born in New Zealand and taught English in France and Spain before settling in Great Britain. She is the Series Editor for Bookworms Factfiles, and has written or co-written more than twenty books, including several Bookworms titles – *Sally's Phone*, *Red Roses*, and *The Girl with Red Hair* (Human Interest, Starter), *Ned Kelly: A True Story* (True Stories, Stage 1), and *Australia and New Zealand* (Factfiles, Stage 3). She has also adapted three volumes of short stories for Bookworms World Stories: *The Long White Cloud: Stories from New Zealand* (Stage 3) and *Doors to a Wider Place: Stories from Australia*, and *The Price of Peace: Stories from Africa* (Stage 4). She has written for the Oxford Dominoes and Dolphin Readers series, and has worked on many other Oxford graded readers series, including Classic Tales, Hotshot Puzzles and Storylines.

She got married in Gibraltar, so she had a destination wedding (though she did not realize it at the time). After the wedding, she and her husband went up onto the Rock of Gibraltar to see the apes. In her free time she likes reading, gardening, watching films, cooking, and making mosaics.