

The Five Fields' Commandments for Bridal Bargains

We went up the mountain and came down with these five commandants for brides on a budget. Please repeat after us:

1. **The Budget is King.** Set a budget and stick to it like a duck on a June bug. Yes, that means making hard choices . . . like whether you really need an orchid corsage for the wedding cake knife—but, hey, we'll try to point out where to put your money. And where not to waste it.
2. **Daylight Savings Time.** Timing is everything—and the same goes for weddings. Everyone wants to be married in the peak wedding months of June and August. Do your budget a favor and get hitched in an off-month like October, November, January, February or March. Remember it is also cheaper to get married in the “daylight”—brunch or afternoon weddings are always less than evening bashes.
3. **Plan Ahead.** Do the math—each year 2.4 million couples will tie the knot . . . but there are only 52 Saturdays each year. The best bargain sites and merchants always book up early. Give yourself plenty of time to comparison shop, get competitive bids and ferret out sales.
4. **Undress the Dress.** If you pay full retail for a bridal gown, please give us your home address so we can come over and whack you on the head with this book. Seriously, we found TWO DOZEN ways to slash that dress bill, from bargains on eBay, special designer sales and outlets to online discounters that can slash your dress bill by 30% to 50% or more.
5. **Cut the Cake—and other frills.** Brides and grooms pile on the sweets at receptions, but can guests really wolf down a wedding cake, groom's cake AND a dessert table? And do you really need a six-tier confection that looks like a chandelier when a simple cake will do? The same goes for other ridiculous bridal items: wedding favors (guests don't need another dust collector), engraved invitations (other options look just as good at half the cost), exotic flowers at the ceremony (guests spend much more time looking at your flowers at the reception).

*Alan and Denise Fields are co-authors of the famous best-seller *Bridal Bargains*, now in its 7th edition, and a new companion wedding planner called *Bridal Passport Wedding Planner: The Dollars & Sense Guide to Planning Your Wedding* (Windsor Peak Press, 2005). You can find out more about the Fields at www.bridalbargainsbook.com and www.bridalpassport.com*