

What Present to Bring to a Wedding

When bringing a gift to a wedding party, think of items that are portable and pleasing.

By Tina Koenig

The age-old dilemma of choosing the perfect wedding gift is more easily solved with a few key considerations, especially when carrying it along on the Big Day.

Some brides-and-grooms-to-be help make their guests' decision easier by registering at a retail store noting their specific desires and taste. Wedding experts recommend sticking to the registry—which is growing in popularity—if you don't know the couple very well. Using a registry makes shopping simple, especially if gifts can be shipped door-to-door.

But if you prefer to select a special custom gift and want to attend the wedding with the present in hand, your personal touch is always acceptable, whether the event takes place in a home or a venue. The following provide a few tips for the best presents to take with you when attending a wedding.

1. Handle with Care

At most weddings a gift table is set up where guests can place items. Gifts are stacked, and may fall or end up stored beneath the table as new guests arrive and place their items on a growing pile. So avoid bringing a present to a wedding that is fragile. Instead of breakable items, consider bringing small presents made of metal such as a handsome pair of sterling silver candlesticks. Also take caution with very small gifts. Wrapping a small gift in a larger box will ensure it isn't lost during transport.

2. No Heavy Lifting

When bringing a present to a wedding always consider who will be transporting it, if the party isn't in the couple's home. Is it too large or heavy that it might be a burden to the person lifting it—including you? Bulky items may be fine if they don't weigh over ten pounds. Some wedding facilities provide a service that delivers gifts to the bride or groom at the end of the evening but don't leave this to chance. Gifts that are lightweight and elegant include items such as high quality stationery, hand towels, robes and linens, which can be personalized with their monogrammed initials.

3. No Perishables Please

The gift of food or a live plant may seem like a unique and thoughtful gift but remember that the bride and groom are likely going on a honeymoon and won't be able to enjoy your gift right away. Leaving perishables out for the duration of the service, cocktail hour and party may not be safe. While it is considerate that you brought oranges from Florida or figs from Italy, they may not keep well for a month. Perhaps a more fun idea for a "living" gift, purchase a club membership that ships new items once a month during the couple's first year of marriage.

4. Sentimental Value

Think carefully before bringing a present to a wedding that is very expensive or of sentimental value. Weddings can last the better part of a day. Many guests and workers come and go throughout the affair. In some cases, wedding venues require security but watching the gifts may not be a top priority. If you plan to give a gift of high value, try to find a private moment with the couple or an immediate family member to make the exchange. Alternatively, present the couple with a card that contains a high quality photo of the gift with details of how you would like to make the exchange.

5. Get Creative with Currency

Giving cash is perfectly acceptable as a gift to bring to a wedding and a sensible choice for a young couple starting a life together. It offers them the option to purchase what they need the most. Including a check along with some meaningful words for the happy couple is portable and practical. Writing a check provides both the giver and the

recipient with a paper trail in the event the gift gets lost. Or perhaps speak with a banker about a smart long-term investment.

6. Advice for Destination Weddings

Keep in mind that if the couple is celebrating their nuptials in an out-of-town or exotic location they won't necessarily want to pack-up gifts to send home. Bringing a gift to a destination wedding increases the odds that the gift could be lost or stolen. In this case, consider sending a gift well in advance of the event or absolutely give cash or an equivalent such as gift certificate to their favorite restaurant.