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Why do brides wear white? Wedding traditions explained

Find out the origins of these common wedding traditions - they're stranger than you think!

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Submitted by: Clemmie Millbank

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Find out why brides wear white. Image: Getty Images

Ever wondered where all those weird wedding traditions come from? Why do brides wear white? What exactly is the purpose of bridesmaids and why does your dad walk you down the aisle? We answer all these questions and more with the weird wedding tradition origins.

The origins of the white wedding dress

Did you know, prior to the 1800s brides traditionally wore red, blue or basically the nicest dress in their wardrobe? That was until Queen Victoria came along and decided to wear her fave colour (white) for her wedding to Prince Albert and suddenly white dresses were all the rage.

The origin of the first look

Traditionally brides and grooms weren't meant to see each other before the wedding day, because if it was an arranged marriage they might want to call it off!

WEIRD WEDDING SUPERSTITIONS

The origins of the bridesmaids

Bridesmaids started to become a thing back in Roman times. If a bride had to travel to her wedding, several of her friends would dress up in similar outfits to her to confuse robbers, kidnappers and evil spirits – natch.

The origin of our father giving you away

This was traditionally to symbolise the transfer of duty of the bride from the father to the new husband (ahhhh so romantic).

The origins of the groom standing on the right

The groom traditionally stands on the right and the bride on the left, this is just there are any objections to the marriage, the groom has his sword arm free to fight off the rioters.

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The origin of wedding rings

The ancient Egyptians first thought of wearing wedding rings, although these were usually made of hemp or woven reeds. They wore it on the fourth finger of the left hand as they believed it held a special vein that connected directly to the heart.

The origin of a veil

Traditionally a symbol of modesty and purity, a veil marks the bride out as sacred.

The origin of the best man

If a marriage was being held without the families' approval a best man was on hand to help defend the groom and literally fight for the marriage.

The origin of the bridal bouquet

Different flowers and herbs were traditionally used to ward off evil spirits, and as people didn't bathe as much back-in-the-day, a sweet-smelling bouquet would've been pretty useful as a perfume too.

WEDDING TRADITIONS WORTH KEEPING**The origin of tossing the bouquet**

It used to be good luck to tear off a piece of the bride's wedding dress (yeah, try that now). But as gowns got fancier and fancier, brides decided they didn't really want to have them trashed so offered up their bouquet instead.

The origin of the garter toss

This dates back to when the wedding guests would accompany the bride and groom on their wedding night and would strip the couple – catching the garter on your nose (yep) became a symbol of good luck – vom.

The origins of throwing rice on the couple

This was once said to bless a couple with fertility and (of course) keep those pesky evil spirits away. We love a good wedding tradition, but dried flower petals hurt a lot less than grains of rice. #justsaying

The origin of the wedding cake

Once upon a time, cakes weren't eaten – nope they were thrown at the bride instead (lucky girl, eh?). In ancient Rome, marriages were finalised when the groom smashed a barley cake over the bride's head. Will no-one think of the updo?!

10 WAYS TO DEFY WEDDING TRADITIONS**The origin of the honeymoon**

There's a few theories, but many believe a honeymoon started back when the groom was essentially kidnapping his bride and had to go into hiding for a month to avoid any trouble – lovely.

The origins of tin cans tied to the wedding car

The noise of these cans was thought to – you guessed it – ward off evil spirits!

Want more? Here are some lucky wedding gift ideas for the bride and groom and 14 wedding traditions it's okay to break.

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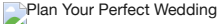
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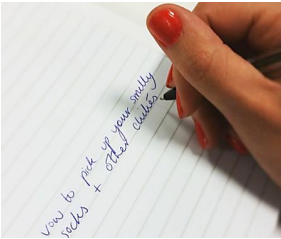
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