

Popular Wedding Traditions and Superstitions

Many of today's wedding traditions and superstitions date back thousands of years¹. It is surprising how many of these were originally to ward off evil spirits, as well as to enhance good luck, fertility and prosperity.

There was no such thing as an engagement or a marriage ceremony to the Anglo-Saxon man. He would just choose a wife and, if necessary, forcibly remove her from her family home to his own home, where she would cook, clean and bear his children.

Later, it was the fathers who recognised the value of their daughters as an asset; they became more protective, and introduced a 'bride price.' Daughters were then considered as the property of their fathers. The fathers now expected prospective husbands to show they could be good providers by offering the family valuable gifts, or by working off the price of the daughter's hand in marriage.

Centuries later, this was reversed, when the fathers began to offer a dowry (payment) to their daughter's prospective husband. The idea was to insure against divorce, as the woman now brought something into the marriage. If the marriage dissolved, the husband would no longer have control of the dowry.

Engagement

By the 6th Century, it was deemed illegal for a man to 'steal' the woman of his choice from her family. These early engagements were known as the 'wed', which was a sealed agreement between the groom and the bride's father that a marriage would take place.

Today, an engagement has no legal standing, although it was somewhat different in Victorian times. The future groom would first request permission of his prospective bride's father for his daughter's 'hand in marriage'. With permission granted, the groom would make the proposal, traditionally by appearing humbly on bended knee in a romantic setting. After the proposal was accepted, the groom would then have had a legal obligation to marry his betrothed and, if he jilted her, she could sue for 'breach of promise'.

Although a proposal of marriage was generally the responsibility of men, tradition permitted women to propose on 29 February. Today, it's not uncommon for women to propose on any day of the year.

The engagement ring was introduced by the Romans, following their conversion to Christianity. It is worn on the third finger of the left hand, due to the Greek belief that this particular finger was connected to the heart.

What's In A Day?

Quite a lot, if you have to take all these superstitions, as well as the convenience of the bride, the groom and their immediate families into consideration.

The day on which a wedding is to be held is steeped with superstitions.

Marry on a:

Monday - brides will be healthy

Tuesday - brides will be wealthy

Wednesday - brides do best of all

Thursday - brides will suffer losses

Friday - brides will suffer crosses

Saturday - brides will have no luck at all

Friday, especially Friday 13th, is considered as an unlucky day to marry on.

Months have their good and bad omens too.

Marry when the year is new, he'll be loving, kind and true
When February birds do mate, you may wed or dread your fate
If you wed when March winds blow, joy and sorrow both you'll know
Marry in April when you can, joy for maiden and for man
Marry in the month of May, you will surely rue the day
Marry when June roses blow, over land and sea you'll go
They who in July do wed, must labour always for their bread
Whoever wed in August be, many a change are sure to see
Marry in September's shine, your living will be rich and fine
If in October you do marry, love will come, but riches tarry
If you wed in bleak November, only joy will come, remember
When December snows fall fast, marry and true love will last

May is considered as unlucky as it is the month in which the Romans celebrated the feast of the dead, and the festival of the goddess of chastity. June, however, is considered a lucky month to marry in, as it was when the ancient Greeks and Romans honoured Juno, the goddess of love and marriage.

The Bride, Her Dress And Bridesmaids

Married in:

White - You've chosen all right

Blue - Your love is true

Pearl - You'll live in a whirl

Brown - You'll live out of town
Red - You will wish yourself dead
Yellow - You're ashamed of your fellow
Green - Ashamed to be seen
Pink - Your fortunes/spirits will sink
Grey - You'll live far away
Black - You'll wish yourself back

With the exception of the Irish bride, it is considered bad luck to wear green.

If the bride finds a spider in her dress, don't panic! This is a sign of good luck.

The bridesmaids dressed similarly to the bride to ward off and confuse the evil spirits about the identity of the real bride.

A glance in the mirror just before the fully-dressed bride leaves for her wedding is considered good luck, but should she return and look again, this is considered bad luck.

The Groom And His Best Man

The groom, his best man, male family and best friends wear similar suits to ward off and confuse the evil spirits as to the real identity of the groom.

The best man was responsible for ensuring the groom's good luck in the following three ways:

- * The groom must carry a lucky mascot in his pocket
- * The groom must not return home for any reason after leaving for the ceremony
- * The minister should be given an odd sum of money for his fee

The Wedding Day

Today, couples often live together before getting married, but it is still considered unlucky for the bride and groom to see each other on the day of the wedding, until they meet at the altar.

Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue, and a silver sixpence in your shoe.

This well known superstition originated in Victorian times. It appears to have lost its last sentence at some stage.

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'Something old' - an old garter, or a piece of family jewellery or accessory is often used.

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'Something new' represents future health, happiness and success.

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'Something borrowed' could be a small trinket borrowed from family or a friend. It must be returned to ensure good luck.

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'Something blue' - it was in ancient Israel, where the bride wore a blue ribbon as a symbol of her fidelity, that the custom of wearing 'something blue' originated.

Good wealth was wished for by placing 'a silver sixpence in your shoe'.

The throwing of symbolic 'confetti' over the couple as they leave the marriage ceremony dates back to ancient times, with the type of 'confetti' changing over the years. The word confetti is Italian for sweets, or confectionery. Rice, grain, nuts and sweets, as well as flower petals, were commonly used to enhance fertility, richness, good luck and sweet experiences.

Flowers are a significant aspect of any wedding. Ideally, the groom should wear a flower that appears in the bridal bouquet in his button-hole. This stems from medieval times, when a knight wore his Lady's colours as a declaration of his love. Some flowers are symbolic. For example, orange blossom signifies loveliness, purity and chastity, while a red chrysanthemum means 'I love you'.

A uniquely British, and somewhat unusual, superstition is having a chimney sweep present at the wedding for good luck; it is not unknown for some couples employ a sweep to attend their wedding. This apparently dates back to the time of King George III. The king was riding his horse in a royal procession when a dog suddenly appeared and started biting his horse's legs, causing him to lose control of his rearing mount. A man rushed out from the crowd, regained control of the horse, and disappeared back into the crowd. Later, when the procession had ended, the King wanted to thank personally the man he believed had saved his life. All that he could discover about the mystery man was his occupation, that of a chimney sweep. The king decreed that from that day all chimney sweeps should be considered as lucky.

The Reception

Sharing a meal after the wedding ceremony may have been seen as confirmation of the new status of the bride and groom, but in Roman times, until the wedded couple had shared bread together, the marriage was not legally binding.

The wedding cake symbolises union and allows the guests to share in the couple's happiness. Today, it forms the focal point at the reception, although it was not always intended to be eaten; small rice cakes were crumbled over the bride's head.

The Romans made small individual cakes from wheat flour, water and salt, which were eaten while the service was in progress. Early versions of today's iced and tiered cakes were introduced to Britain from France in 1660, with the fruits and grains symbolising fertility.

A well-known tradition is for the bride and groom to make the first cut in the cake together. The groom places his right hand over the right hand of his bride. Her left hand is then placed on top, and she places the knife at the centre of the bottom cake tier and slowly cuts the cake, with the help of the groom. The cake being cut is then shared with the guests. The top tier is set aside for the christening of the couple's first baby.

Bridesmaids kept their slice and placed it under their pillow, in the belief that they would dream of their future husband.

Leaving The Reception And The Honeymoon

A well-known tradition is for the bride to throw her bouquet over her shoulder, into a group of unmarried female guests, as she leaves the reception, the belief being that whoever catches the bouquet will be the next to marry. Before a bouquet was used, the bride would throw her wedding shoe.

A similar tradition for men is tossing the garter - the groom removes the bride's garter and throws it into a group of unmarried men.

With the wedding over, as the couple change into their going-away clothes, the bride should be sure she has removed and thrown away every pin from her dress and veil. Not to do so will bring her bad luck.

Wedding guests often tie objects - usually empty cans - to the just-married couple's going-away car. Traditionally, old boots were used - this stems from when the bride's father presented the groom with one of her slippers, giving him the 'upper hand' and the entitlement to beat his wife if she displeased him. The slipper was placed on the husband's side of the bed-head, a reminder of who was the boss. If the wife was the more dominant, however, neighbours transferred the power of the slipper to her, and named her 'the old boot'. According to superstition, the first one of the couple to make a purchase after the wedding is the dominant person in the partnership.

Carrying of the new wife over the threshold of the couple's new home is believed to bring good fortune in their future life. It also prevents the wife from stepping into their new home left-foot first, which is considered to be unlucky.

When a groom used to capture his bride, they would hide from her family until the search was called off. Then after they were married, they would hide for one full cycle of the moon, drinking honey wine, hence 'honeymoon'.

Wedding Folklore from around the world

Taken from..... http://www.chicagomarriage.com/wedding_traditions.htm

Many of today's popular wedding ceremony and reception traditions can be traced to ancient Egyptian and European customs. These were often based on symbolism, superstition, folklore, religion, and even the belief that evil spirits could bring disease and death to newlyweds and crops, which was very important in many farm-based early cultures. Although the exact origin and usefulness of many of these early wedding traditions are not always clear, popular acceptance has allowed them to flourish. Besides, many of these wedding traditions are just plain fun!

According to various sources, some of the early marriages were literally carried out by the Groom and his "Bridesmen" (or "Bridesknights") who would kidnap a woman (the origin of "carrying a Bride over the threshold") from another tribe! The Groom and his fellow conspirators would then fight off the female's family of tribesmen with swords held in their right hand while the Groom would hold the captured Bride in his left hand, which is the origin of why a Bride stands on the left side of the Groom at a wedding.

After a successful capture, another politically correct practice was for the Groom to hide his new Bride for one month for mating purposes. It is said that the word "honeymoon" was created to describe this one month cycle of the moon when they would drink mead, which was a honey sweetened alcoholic brew that effects both sobriety and the acidity of the womb, thus increasing fertility.

Beginning around 1000 A.D., marriages were often nothing more than trading chips used in bartering land, social status, political alliances, or money (no checks or credit cards were accepted) between families!

The word, "**Wedding**" comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "wedd" that meant a man would marry a woman and pay the Bride's father.

Bouquet

Wedding bouquets were originally made of such strong herbs as thyme and garlic, which were meant to frighten away evil spirits, and to cover the stench emitting from people who had not bathed recently!

Bouquet Toss

In ancient times, it was believed that a Bride was especially lucky on her wedding day. Guests would sometimes tear at her dress for a souvenir piece of good luck to take home. The Bride's tossing of her bouquet grew from her desire to offer a good luck souvenir, and prevent guests from bothering her (and her dress!) during her reception.

Bridesmaids

Early Brides and Bridesmaids wore similar dresses in order to confuse evil spirits.

Bridal Shower

Back in the days when weddings were arranged by family members, it is said that a poor Dutchman fell in love with a girl whose father refused her a dowry. Their friends showered her with enough gifts to help them start a household. According to another story, the first "Bridal Shower" occurred at the end of the 19th century. At a party, the Bride's friends placed small gifts inside a parasol and opened it over the Bride's head. When she opened the parasol, she was "showered" with presents!

Bridal Veil

When marriages were arranged by family members, the newlyweds very rarely were allowed to see one another. Family members exchanging a dowry were afraid that if the Groom didn't like the appearance of the Bride's face, he might refuse to marry her. This is why the Father of the Bride "gave the Bride away" to the Groom at the actual wedding ceremony. Only after lifting her veil just prior to the ceremony did the Groom see the Bride's face for the first time! Early Greek and Roman Brides wore red or yellow veils to represent fire, and to ward off demons.

Carrying The Bride Over The Threshold

When a Groom used to steal his Bride from her tribe, he was forced to carry her kicking and screaming. This act of thievery has evolved into a more romantic gesture, welcoming the Bride into her new home.

Garter

Brides originally tossed a garter, rather than a bouquet, at a wedding reception. In the 14th century, this custom changed after Brides became tired of fighting off drunken men who tried to remove the garter themselves! According to one legend, the garter toss in England evolved from an earlier tradition of "flinging the stocking". On their wedding night, guests would follow the Bride and Groom to their bedroom, wait until they undressed, steal their stockings, and then "fling" them at the couple! The first person to hit the Bride or Groom on the head would supposedly be the next person to marry.

Money Dance

According to one custom, when arranged marriages were common, the Groom collected a dowry only after his marriage was consummated. The money dance insured that the couple would have some money before they left their wedding reception. According to another wedding tradition, the people of the village gave gifts of pottery, livestock, and garden plants to the newlyweds because the Bride and Groom had no money to acquire these items until they had children, after which a dowry was exchanged.

Penny In Shoe

This is a European tradition to bring the Bride good luck, fortune, and protection against want. After the Wedding Day, the lucky penny can be turned into a piece of jewelry as a pendant, charm for a bracelet, or ring setting.

Ring Finger

Prior to the 5th century, the ring finger was actually the index finger. Later, it was believed that the third finger contained the "vein of love" that led directly to the heart.

Shoes On Vehicle

Ancient Romans used to transfer to the Groom his authority over his Bride when her Father gave the Groom her shoes. In later years, guests threw their own shoes at the newlyweds to signify this transfer of authority. Today, this tradition is kept alive by simply tying old shoes to the back of the newlywed's vehicle before they leave their wedding reception celebration.

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue

This superstition of the Bride wearing something that fits each of these four categories originated in Europe to ward off evil spirits. Something Old: This tradition symbolized the sense of continuity while making the transition from a single person to that of a married couple. Something New: This tradition symbolized that marriage represented a transition to adulthood. Something Borrowed: This tradition symbolized the popular belief that by borrowing something from a happily married couple, good fortune would follow the newlyweds. Something Blue: In ancient Israel, blue was the border color of the Bride's dress, symbolizing purity, constancy and fidelity.

Stag Parties

This is the male equivalent of the Bridal Shower. Roman empire soldiers would feast with the Groom the night before his wedding to say goodbye to his irresponsible days of bachelorhood, and to renew their vows of allegiance to their friendships.

Tossing Rice

By believing that newlyweds brought good luck, guests used to shower them with nuts and grains to insure a bountiful harvest, and many children to work the land. During years of a poor harvest, rice was tossed instead. This tradition continues today with rice or birdseed (where permitted), or bubbles to wish the Bride and Groom much happiness. Incidentally, it is not true that birds eating rice thrown after a wedding ceremony will cause their stomachs to enlarge and eventually explode. This myth may have simply evolved from church and synagogue employees weary from cleaning up after every wedding ceremony!

Tuxedo

Until the 20th century, the Groom simply wore his "Sunday best" on his wedding day. It is said that President Teddy Roosevelt popularized the modern tuxedo.

Tying The Knot

This comes from the days of the Roman empire when the Bride wore a girdle that was tied in knots. The Groom untied the knots prior to the consummation of their marriage.

Wedding Cake

Also during the days of the Roman empire, wedding cakes were baked of wheat or barley. At the reception, they were traditionally broken over the head of the new Bride by the Groom as a symbol of her fertility. Guests would then scramble for pieces of the cake, and take them home for good luck. It later became a tradition to place many small cakes on top of each other as high as possible. The newlyweds would then try to exchange a kiss over the top of the tower of cakes without knocking them down. During the reign of King Charles II of England, the baker added icing, and the modern style of wedding cake was born. It is unclear when the tradition of the newlyweds smashing wedding cake into each other's face first began, and uncertain if such marriages are consummated later that day or evening!

Wedding Ring

According to some historians, the first recorded marriage rings date back to the days when early man tied plaited circlets around the Bride's wrists and ankles to keep her spirit from running away. Approximately 3,000 BC, Egyptians originated the phrase "without beginning, without end" in describing the significance of the wedding ring. These rings were made of woven hemp which constantly wore out and needed replacement. Although Romans originally used iron, gold is now used as a symbol of all that is pure. Diamonds were first used by Italians, who believed that it was created from the flames of love. In some European cultures, the wedding ring is worn on the right hand. In other cultures, an engagement ring is worn on the left hand, and the wedding ring is worn on the right hand.

Wedding Toast

It is said that this tradition first began in France, where bread would be placed in the bottom of two drinking glasses for the newlyweds. They would then drink as fast as they could to be the first person to get to the toast. According to legend, the winner would rule their household!

White Wedding Dress

This was made popular in the 1840's by Queen Victoria, who chose this instead of the traditional royal "silver" wedding dress. Prior to this, Brides simply wore their best dress on their wedding day.

Popular Ethnic & Religious Wedding Traditions

Various wedding customs have their roots and popularity based on ethnic origin.

African-American

At some African-American wedding ceremonies, newlyweds "jump over a broom" to symbolize the beginning of a new life. The ritual was created during slavery, when African-Americans could not legally marry. Some people trace this wedding tradition to an African tribal marriage ritual of placing sticks on the ground representing the couple's new home. Today, the jumping of the broom is a symbol of sweeping away of the old, and welcoming the new. Broom Jumping can be performed either at the wedding ceremony, after the minister pronounces the newlyweds husband and wife, or at the wedding reception just after the Bridal Party enters the reception area. A fully decorated broom can be purchased at ethnic stores. Other couples may prefer to use a regular household broom decorated with bows, flowers, and/or other trinkets in the wedding colors. At some receptions, guests may participate in the ceremony by tying ribbons around the broom before the Broom Jumping begins.

Belgian

As the Bride walks up the aisle at her Wedding Ceremony, the Bride stops and hands her mother a flower from her bouquet and they embrace. After the Wedding Ceremony is finished, the new couple walk to the Groom's side of the church and the Bride gives her mother-in-law a second flower from her bouquet and they also embrace.

Chinese

The Bride may wear a red wedding dress, symbolizing love and joy. At the wedding reception, a nine-course meal (lasting up to three hours) is very popular. A family member may act as the official "Master of Ceremonies" orchestrating family introductions, toasts, comedy sketches, and a reenactment of the newlywed's courtship.

Eastern Orthodox Church

The rings are blessed by the Priest, who takes them in hand, and makes the sign of the cross over the Bride and Groom's head. The "Koumbaros" (Best Man) then exchanges the rings three times, taking the Bride's ring and placing it on the Groom's finger, and vice-versa. This exchange signifies that in married life, the weaknesses of the one partner will be compensated for by the strength of the other, and the imperfections of one by the perfection's of the other. Candles are held throughout the Wedding Service, which begins immediately after the Betrothal Service. The candles are like the lamps of the five wise maidens of the Bible who, because they had enough oil in them, were able to receive Christ when He came in the darkness of the night. The candles symbolize the spiritual willingness of the couple to receive Christ, Who will bless them through this sacrament. The Office of

the Crowning which follows is the climax of the Wedding Service. The crowns are signs of the glory and honor that God crowns them during the sacrament. The Bride and Groom are crowned as the King and Queen of their own little "kingdom", their home, which they will (hopefully) rule with wisdom, justice, and integrity.

French

One early French wedding custom signifies the new alliance created by uniting two families through marriage. During the Wedding Reception, the new couple raise a glass of wine from two different vineyards. They then pour their wine into a third glass and each drinks from it.

German

During the wedding ceremony, the Groom may kneel on the hem of the Bride's dress to symbolize his control over her. Not to be outdone, the Bride may step on the Groom's foot when she rises to symbolize her power over him!

Greek

Some newlyweds wear a crown of flowers during the wedding ceremony. The couple may walk around the altar three times representing the Holy Trinity. At the reception, Greek folk dances are popular, with guests lining up in a single file line.

Hispanic

During the wedding ceremony, thirteen gold coins (representing the Groom's dowry to his Bride) are often blessed by the priest, and passed between the hands of the newlyweds several times before ending with the Bride. A large rosary or white rope ("lazo") is sometimes wound around the couple's shoulders in a figure-8 symbol of "infinity" during the wedding ceremony to symbolize their union as one.

Irish

In the early 1900's, an Irish couple would walk to church together on their Wedding Day. If the people of their parish approved their union they would throw rice, pots, pans, brushes and other household items at the couple as they approached their church. Today, "hen parties" (Bridal Showers) have replaced this practice. Some Irish people wear a "**claddagh**" ring for a wedding ring. This ring was created by a master goldsmith, Richard Joyce, 400 years ago in a fishing village called Claddagh, which overlooks Galway Bay. The claddagh symbolizes love, loyalty, and friendship. On the right hand, with the heart facing inward, it means the wearer's heart is unoccupied. Facing outwards reveals love is being considered. When worn on the left hand facing outward, it signifies that the wearer is seriously committed or married. At some Irish wedding receptions, the Groom is lifted in a chair ("jaunting car") to celebrate that he is a married man. For good luck, the newlyweds are given a horseshoe to display in their home in the upward position. A traditional Irish wedding cake is a fruitcake. Traditional Irish toasts, in addition to remarks from the Best Man, are very popular.

Irish Marriage Blessing

May God be with you and bless you;
May you see your children's children.
May you be poor in misfortune,
Rich in blessings,
May you know nothing but happiness.
From this day forward.

Italian

Some Brides may choose to carry a white silk or satin purse ("busta") to store gifts of money that are welcomed. "Tarantella" folk dances are popular at the wedding reception. Another Italian custom is to present five sugar-coated almonds to the guests which represent health, wealth, long life, fertility, and happiness.

Japanese

The Bride and her Parents might visit the Groom's house on wedding day. At the wedding ceremony, the Bride's wedding gown is often a traditional wedding kimono. She usually changes into something else at the wedding reception. The first of nine sips of sake drunk by the Bride and Groom at their wedding ceremony symbolizes the official union of marriage.

Jewish

It is a Jewish tradition for a Bride to present her Groom with a tallit to wear for his Aufruf, the reading of the Torah prior to their ceremony. The Groom's family often give candlesticks to the Bride that can be used during the actual wedding ceremony. It is also a custom for Jewish men to cover their heads at all times, especially during prayers, with a kippot (yarmulkes), as a form of reverence, respect, and acknowledgement that God is present everywhere. In some congregations, women also cover their heads to pray.

Some Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform wedding ceremonies take place under a chuppah (wedding canopy). The chuppah is a rectangular piece of cloth large enough for the Bride, Groom, Rabbi, and sometimes other members of the wedding party to stand under. The chuppah signifies the new home about to be shared by the newlyweds. Before the procession to the chuppah, the tanaim are signed, and the Groom is asked if he is ready to take on the responsibilities outlined in the kepubah. He signifies his willingness by accepting a handkerchief or other object offered to him by the Rabbi. The two witnesses to this sign the ketubah. While the actual text of the ketubah is never meant to vary, the border decorations on this document have over the centuries been the subject of remarkable artistic creations. At the beginning of the wedding ceremony, the Bride might observe the Biblical custom of "Circling the Groom" seven times. This practice is seen as a powerful act of definition, where the Bride will symbolically create the space that they will share as husband and wife. In Judaism, the number seven is mystical and represents completion and

fulfillment. Just as the creation of the world was finished in seven days, the seven circles complete the couple's search for each other.

The *bedeken*, or veiling, is a small ceremony in which the Groom lowers the veil over the Bride's face, and by this act acknowledges that he is marrying the correct woman. This custom originated in the story of Jacob who didn't see the face of his Bride prior to his wedding and was tricked into marrying Leah instead of his intended, Rachel.

The Jewish marriage ceremony consists of two parts: *Erusin* (pre-engagement) and *Nissuin* (marriage). These ceremonies were historically performed up to one year apart, but more recently the two have been combined into one ceremony. The *Erusin* ceremony begins with *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine. *Kiddush* is part of virtually all Jewish observances as a prayer of sanctification. The exchange of rings completes the *Erusin* ceremony.

In Jewish law, a verbal declaration of marriage is not legally binding unless an act of *Kinyan*, a formal physical acquisition is completed. This is reached when two witnesses see the Bride accept a ring from the Groom, and he recites the words of marriage. After the *ketubah* has been read at the ceremony, wine is often poured into a new glass, and the *Sheva Berakhot* (Seven Benedictions) are recited over it. The Bride and Groom then drink from the glass of wine. With the ceremony complete, tradition calls for the Groom to break the wrapped glass by stomping on it. This final action symbolizes the destruction of the Holy Temple in Israel, and reminds guests that love is fragile. The audience may shout *Mazel Tov*, and the Bride and Groom kiss.

Immediately after the wedding ceremony, the couple may spend a few private moments together, or *Yichud* as a symbolic consummation of their marriage. Later, the *Mitzvah*, or obligation, of rejoicing at a wedding reception is incumbent on the Bride, Groom, and guests.

Mexican

Red beads are sometimes tossed at Newlyweds to bring them good luck.

Polish

The Mother of the Bride may choose to place the veil on the Bride before the wedding ceremony to symbolize her last task that a Mother does on behalf of her girl before she becomes a married woman. A traditional folk song ("Twelve Angels") is sometimes played at the reception, allowing the Bride to transfer her veil, and good luck to be married, to her Maid of Honor, Bridesmaids, and Flower Girl. A morning wedding ceremony is sometimes followed with a brief afternoon luncheon, several hours of downtime when guests return home, and then a long evening wedding reception. Polka dances and other audience participation events are very popular.

Scottish

The Groom and his Groomsmen often wear Scottish kilts (and traditionally no undergarments!). The Groom may present the Bride with an engraved silver teaspoon on

their wedding day to symbolize that they will never go hungry. A traditional sword dance is sometimes performed at their wedding reception.

Spanish

A Spanish Groom sometimes gives his Bride thirteen coins in memory of Christ and the twelve apostles. The Bride carries them in a small bag during the Wedding Ceremony as a symbol that the Groom promises to support and care for her.