

### Chinese

Red is central to the wedding theme of China. It signifies love, joy and prosperity. The bride's wedding gown is often red, as are the wedding invitations and wedding gift boxes or envelopes for cash gifts. Even the bride's and groom's homes are decorated in red on the wedding day.

### Estonian

In Estonia, there is a wedding custom to predict the next groom. After the newlywed bride tosses her wedding bouquet to the single women, the groom is surrounded and blindfolded by the single men. They spin him around, then the groom puts his top hat on the bachelor next to marry.

### Indian

Sweets, eggs and money are woven into the wedding themes of India. They symbolize, respectively, a sweet life, fertility and prosperity.

### Italian

The menu at an Italian reception is nearly as important as the wedding itself. Guests may be served as many as 14 different courses with wine and other beverages.

### Jamaican

A dark fruitcake liberally laced with rum is served at wedding receptions of Jamaican couples. After the celebration, the wedding party slices the remainder of the cake and mails pieces to friends and relatives who were unable to attend the wedding reception.

### Jewish

The Jewish wedding ceremony takes place under a canopy called a *chuppah*. After seven blessings, the couple share wine, then the groom wraps the wine glass in a napkin, places it on the floor and stamps on it.

### Persian

The religious ceremony is known as *aghd*. The bride plays a "hard to get" game. The imam asks the bride if she will marry the groom. The bride will not answer yes immediately, but instead makes the imam repeat the question three times.

### Mexican

During the marriage vows, a white ribbon or rosary, called a "lasso," is symbolically wrapped around the couple's necks, which represents their joining. It is customary for a Mexican groom to give his wife a wedding present of 13 gold coins, which are blessed by the priest during the marriage ceremony. This gesture represents the groom's commitment to support his new wife.

### Pakistani

Traditional Pakistani marriage celebrations last for four days. On the fourth day, the couple host their first dinner as husband and wife. The groom's family invites all of the guests to their home for a feast.

### Thai

The bride's and groom's families get together in the afternoon for the traditional *rod nam sang*. The bride and bridegroom sit close together on the floor or a small stage with their hands pressed together, held under their chins, in respect to Buddha. A flower chain is wrapped around their hands. The most senior person at the event will soak the couple's hands in water and wish them good luck.

### Korean

At a Korean wedding, a duck or goose is the symbol of lifelong commitment. Both ducks and geese mate for life and represent faithfulness.

### Somalian

The male guests play a post-wedding party quiz game. The men take turns looking for a hidden knot that unties the strings on a pear-shaped container loaded with meat and dates prepared by the mother of the bride. If the contestant fails, he must answer a question about Somalia. The game can go on for days.

### Welsh

It is a marriage custom in Wales for the bride's family to kidnap her just before the wedding ceremony. The groom and his family follow in pursuit, and whoever rescues the bride-to-be will marry within a year.



# Weddings around the world

A sampling of customs and traditions in different cultures

