

WEDDING SPECIAL

HOW TO SURVIVE ANY WEDDING...

...and, more importantly, how to do it in style! By Jo Usmar

Weddings can be awesome. Free fizz, friends and fun times. But with the possibility of boring tablemates, inappropriate questions from strangers and a potential encounter with an ex, being a guest can also be a matrimonial minefield. "Everyone can have a blast at a wedding," says Sharon Naylor, author of over 35 wedding books. "You just have to apply some tricks and tips." Handily for you, our wedding survival guide will ensure a good time is had by all.

SINGLE MINGLING

No doubt about it, weddings are romantic. As soon as you make eye contact with Hot Usher No.3, you'll be dreaming of your own "I do" moment. But before you go for that cheeky snog, there are a few things to consider. Only three per cent of couples who meet at weddings stay together long-term*. Who cares, right? It's only a kiss. Well, it is, until you find out he's the maid of honour's ex. And they only split a week ago. "Get as much background as you can on whoever you have your eye on," says Sharon. "It's crucial to avoiding problems later on." Also, if you do pull, be discreet. Overenthusiastic PDAs are bad manners anywhere.

EX ENCOUNTERS

You've got sweaty palms and butterflies in your belly because you know your ex will be attending with his new squeeze. Eek. "Be brave and speak to him straight away - you'll look like the bigger person," says etiquette expert William Hanson.

DO

- * Say: "Nice to see you, have a good time," then strut off. Short 'n' sweet.
- * Introduce yourself to his new girlfriend with your full name. Only saying your first name sounds too familiar, as if she should know who you are.
- * Nod whenever you catch his eye, then look away. This avoids getting caught in an accidental deep-and-meaningful moment.

DON'T

- * Spend the whole day moaning about him to anyone who'll listen.
- * Hash out unresolved issues - especially after a few too many Pimm's.
- * Get upset with your friends if they're talking to him. It's a wedding, so socialising is expected and normal rules don't apply.

FOOD FURY

Your stomach's rumbling so loudly people are scowling at you, but it's not your fault. The bride and groom's photo shoot has been going on for three hours. Here's how to stave off starvation:

- * It's rude to rock out at a packed lunch, even if the Tupperware matches your dress. So break up energy bars into bite-size pieces, store 'em in your clutch and discreetly snack on bits until dinner.
- * Swap a glass of champers for an espresso martini - a caffeine hit will perk you right up.

SEATING PLAN SHENANIGANS

Bride wars have been fought over seating plans so: "Put up and shut up about where you're sitting," says luxury wedding planner Sarah Haywood. Instead, style out whatever situation you're squeezed into.

*** Boring table with the great aunts** Liven things up. Get everyone to put £1 in a glass and bet how long they think the best man's speech will last. The winner takes all.

*** Random table with the work colleagues** Start a game of "I Have Never...". People take it in turns to say something they've never done; anyone who has done it takes a drink. For example: "I have never gone skinny dipping." Bottoms up.

*** Fun table with your BFFs** Be merry, but not too much, and keep an eye on how loud you're being. No one wants to get told off by the father of the bride.

DRINKING GAMES

Of course, everyone's going to have a drink - or, er, 20 - at a wedding. Especially if it's a free bar. But you *don't* want to be the guest who vombs over the buffet table while trying to limbo under it. Here's how to pace your drunken self:

- * Ask for extra ice in your glass to dilute the booze.
- * Have a glass of lime and soda between every alcoholic drink. This will fool the fun police into thinking you're still drinking, while you're really just rehydrating. Sneaky.
- * If you're a lightweight, avoid the punch. The fruity ingredients will mask the taste of alcohol, so you'll only realise you've necked the equivalent of a bottle of wine when you're grabbing the mic from the DJ.

'BRIDE WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT OVER SEATING PLANS'

IRRITATING INTERROGATIONS

There's something about weddings that make perfect strangers think it's OK to ask really personal questions. The kind of questions that make you want to punch them in the face. Obviously, that isn't an option, so what's the best way to respond to these nosey space-invaders? With these mind-your-own-business comebacks, of course.

Q Why aren't you two engaged then, hmm?

A "He asked and I said no."/"People are much less likely to get divorced if they wait until they're over 30."/"Married people are boring."/"I'm actually waiting for the right opportunity to dump him."

Q You're married - how come you're not pregnant yet?

A "I'm a virgin."/"I am pregnant. You're the first person we've told!"/"I think all children are monsters."/"We're actually waiting to see how your kids turn out before we decide."

Q Why are you still single?

A "Are you asking me out?"/"I'm waiting for your hubby to divorce you."/"I'm actually having an affair."

SOCIAL MEDIA MAYHEM

While it might be tempting to live blog your mate's big day on Twitter, Facebook and/or Instagram... Don't. You're supposed to be enjoying the wedding, not glued to your phone spell-checking your latest hilarious status update. Or worse, uploading incriminating photos of the best man and chief bridesmaid.

Plus, it isn't fair on the bride and groom's friends if you put up photos of them. A recent survey found that 52 per cent of couples make a rule that they will be the first ones to post pictures of their weddings on social media sites.** "This isn't your day," says Sarah. "Ask permission if you're going to post anything." 



Tell us what you think on Twitter #FabMagWedding or at Facebook.com/Fabulous

