How To Cut Your Wedding Costs To Under $25,000

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It has been almost a year since I started investigating the rising costs of holding a wedding here in Singapore, and yet judging by the consistent stream of readers that article continues to draw, apparently Iâ??m not the only one whoâ??s worried about how much itâ??ll take to get through the whole affair.

Weâ??ve already started planning for ours, so hereâ??s some elements we looked at to help bring the total costs down. If youâ??re looking to keep your budget between $10k â?? $25k *(or maybe throw in $5k more for the little things that crop up)*...these tips will help get you there.

1. Set a Budget

The average cost to hold a wedding in Singapore ranges from $25,000 â?? $60,000. How much can you afford? When planning your wedding, never skip the first step of setting a budget. Ask yourself realistically how much you and your spouse are willing to spend on this one-day affair (remember, there are other costs that come after the wedding, such as honeymoon and housing!) and work within those parameters.

While most couples usually end up exceeding the initial budget they set, it gives you a framework of costs to start working with, thus controlling your expenses compared to if you hadnâ??t drawn up any budget at all.

2. Draw up a list of â??Must-Havesâ?• vs. â??Wish-To-Haveâ?•



Mr Mark Foo and Ms Stephanie Sim releasing 50 butterflies, bought for $5 each. PHOTO: REVELATION CREATIVE HOUSE

Butterflies are a lovely touch, but do you really need to spend that $250?
Set the priorities for your wedding and decide what the must-haves and wish-to-have are. Allocate your budget to the must-haves, and then if you still have excess money remaining, start looking at your list of desired items that might make the occasion even more special.

3. Limit the Guest List

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I know, you only get married once, so it is only natural that you want everyone in your life there to celebrate with you.

But unless you have lots of money to spare, it is far more realistic to keep it personal and intimate. You donâ??t have to invite everyone and his neighbour. Each guest increases your cost drastically, especially those who bring their children and partners. Invite only your closest family and friends â?? people who truly play an important role in your life. Leave out the hi-bye friends and acquaintances. I always joke about how folks whom I havenâ??t seen in a year will be automatically excluded from my guestlist, but thatâ??s not necessarily a bad idea to consider if you want to trim the length of your invitation list. Another tip â?? if someone didnâ??t invite you to their wedding, you donâ??t have to feel bad about not inviting them either. Theyâ??ll understand!

4. Explore unconventional locations



Most weddings are held in hotels. Thereâ??s nothing wrong with that â?? hotels have become so good at organizing weddings that they usually take care of almost everything for you. However, it all comes at a price.

If youâ??re looking to keep your wedding costs down, be creative. You donâ??t have to hold your wedding in grand expensive places â?? try country clubs, restaurants or cafes, gardens, function rooms, a house (perhaps even one with its own garden) of a rich friend or via AirBnBâ?¦

5. Timing

Choose an off-peak season for your wedding! Weekend weddings are more expensive with Saturdays being the most exorbitant. One of my friends chose a Thursday for her wedding, stating that those who werenâ??t able to take leave for her affair obviously showed that they didnâ??t treat her as important enough, which helped her to reduce her guest list even further.

Having a lunch or tea wedding will also lower your costs. Just note that while wedding lunches used to be considerably cheaper in Singapore, many of the hotels have now caught up, and you donâ??t necessarily get a significant discount for lunch over dinner anymore. Compare prices before deciding on whatâ??s best for you and your guests.

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6. Shop smart â?? Packages vs. Ala Carte

Many couples are lazy (or time-pressed) â?? they go to a wedding fair and sign up for an all-inclusive package after being swayed by the salespeople on the discounts theyâ??re enjoying. While some packages do in fact help you to save costs, not all packages are the same.

Often, if youâ??re willing to do a little homework and source around, youâ??ll find that going ala carte can sometimes be cheaper. Many smaller shops offer great deals, and you can get quotations from several suppliers to compare quality, quantity, price and service. A friend of mine got her (absolutely gorgeous) bridal flower bouquet at her local market for less than $30 when the bridal shop quoted her $120 for something similar. Check all the fine print and most importantly, donâ??t just buy everything from the first shop you walk into!

7. Food options

A banquet is the most common, but you can also consider other options like high tea, brunch or buffet, instead of the always opting for the usual sit-down 8 course affair. If your family allows it, you could even skip the banquet altogether â?? more younger folks are opting for this today.

Donâ??t forget to factor in alcohol costs! I recommend holding your wedding on a Sunday as people tend to drink less, given that Monday is a working day. People also drink less at lunch than they do at dinner. Depending on your guestsâ?? preferences, you could even replace wine with beer and cider, which are more filling and affordable.

8. Wedding Attire



If youâ??ve a flair for design (or sourced a design online that you really like), sometimes tailoring your own gown can be cheaper than buying or renting from a bridal shop. I have friends who bought their gowns from Taobao for just a few hundred dollars â?? considerably lesser than the cost of renting one from our local shops.

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Smaller boutiques usually carry popular styles at a fraction of designer boutiquesâ?? cost, if youâ??re willing to walk around and explore different options. Otherwise, renting is another way of keeping costs low. Borrow your accessories if you can (and donâ??t mind) â?? many brides buy bridal accessories only to never use them again after their big day. Youâ??ll be able to find many of those on second-hand marketplaces like Carousell!

Donâ??t forget to also think about how many gowns you need. In my opinion, 2 is more than enough. Thereâ??s a difference between a wedding and a fashion show.

9. Flowers, balloons, glitter



Add a personal touch and decorate your venue with your friends and family! If you know another wedding is taking place at the same venue on the same day, approach the couple and suggest co-sharing of decorations â?? if they agree, you would have gotten yourselves a win-win arrangement!

While flowers are pretty, you donâ??t have to fill up the entire place with real flowers either â?? mixing them up with fake display ones at non-essential areas can help to give off the same effect, which my cousin did recently for his to great effect. Otherwise, if youâ??re not a fan of fake flowers, you could mix

it up with balloons or glitters as well. I love the idea of bubbles, as they make for really pretty photos, but youâ??ll have to weigh this with the possibility that your wedding dress or suit might get stained by the soap, so look out for the material and washing instructions first!

10. Wedding invitation card



Seriously, 20 years down the road, neither you nor your guests will remember about how classy your wedding invitations looked. So donâ??t let this frivolous expense set you back ; there are a few ways to skimp on this area. If youâ??ve talented friends, check if any of them are willing to do a drawing or painting for you to distribute on your invitation cards as a wedding favour. Otherwise, you can always hire a freelance designer to do the same â?? it wonâ??t cost much.

Instead of printing all your cards, send e-cards instead (youâ??ll save on printing costs and help the environment at the same time!). You can easily make them yourself, or design them online for cheap. For the younger generation, get people to RSVP on Facebook, and set the e-card as the event cover photo.

11. Photography and Videography



Pre-Wedding:

Is a pre-wedding photoshoot necessary? More couples are flying overseas (Korea, Taiwan, Europe) for their pre-wedding photoshoots, and not everyone factors in these additional costs into their budget when they should. If youâ??re not keen on skipping this, consider hiring a photographer based in the country youâ??re flying to, so that you wonâ??t have to pay for their airfare and accommodation costs (in contrast to hiring a Singapore-based photographer).

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Alternatively, you could do it locally or in Malaysia where it is slightly cheaper.

Some couples also hire a videographer to capture their love story, which they then air during the ceremony. Is this completely necessary? Your call. Or what about filming your own?

Actual Wedding Day

How many hours do you need the photographer and/or videographer to be there for? Do you even need both?



I had a friend who didnâ??t engage any photographers or videographers for her wedding. She simply told her guests to take photos and tag them in it so that theyâ??ll have memories of the event from their

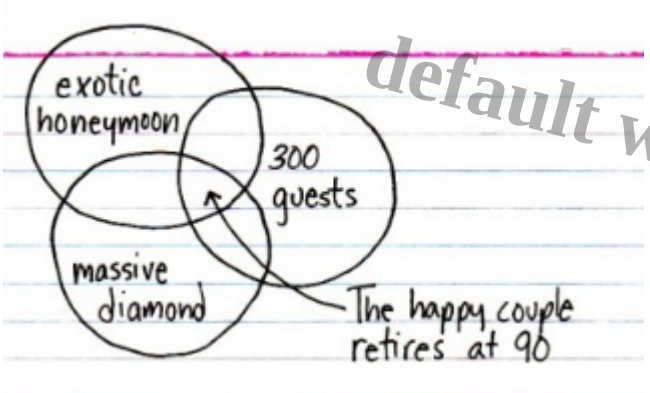
guestsâ?? perspective. Be creative!

12. Bridal Makeup

There are makeup artists who charge a premium for wedding makeup, and often try to get you to buy ampoules so that your skin looks better as well. In my opinion, you can always provide your own ampoule (buy outside, it is cheaper) or just do your own facials to keep your skin in tip-top condition. I recommend starting on an affordable organic skincare regime like Blended which can help your skin radiate from inside-out on your big day.

Source for up-and-coming makeup artists who tend to charge lower fees for their services as theyâ??re still starting out and gaining experience (students from art colleges like LaSelle are extremely talented and no less professional). If you have a friend who is really good with makeup, you could ask her for a favour or give her a small token fee to help you out as well.

13. Miscellaneous Costs / Freebies



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Donâ??t forget to factor in other costs like your ang pow box, guest book and decorations. If you can, negotiate with your venue provider or other suppliers to include these as freebies. Otherwise, try DIY-ing your own!

If youâ??re going with a hotel, here are some other stuff you can try to ask for free:

â?? Free flow of beer or red wine
â?? Additional night stay
â?? More carpark coupons
â?? Free helper room
â?? Free anniversary stay
â?? Free additional projector
â?? Free sound system

Have fun planning your wedding! If youâ??ve any other ideas to share about your own #budgetwedding, do drop me a message anytime. Iâ??d love to hear your stories.

With love,
Budget Babe

Category

1. Family

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