



## *Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment Wedding Planning Newsletter #22*

### **Wedding Cake Timeline & Information**

*Keeping track of time is important when planning a wedding...Use the following cake designing timeline to maximize your schedule...*

**3-4 months before:** Begin interviewing prospective cake designers.

**2 months before:** Decide on wedding cake style, flavor(s), icing, and size. Pay a deposit on the cake.

**2 weeks before:** Confirm wedding date, time, location, and number of guests with the cake designer.

**Wedding Day:** Assign a family member or wedding party member to assist with cake payment, placement and/or decoration.

**Day after:** Assign a family member or wedding party member to return any rental items associated with the cake presentation.

**2 weeks after:** Eat the Top Tier of your cake before it goes bad. *Traditionally, you freeze the Top Tier of your cake for your first anniversary, but nobody has developed a method to keep it tasting good after all that time in the freezer.*

**1 year after:** Have your cake designer bake a duplicate of your Top Tier for your anniversary.

### **Glossary**

*Understanding the various “languages” of certain wedding vendors can be challenging...We’ve provided a cake design glossary to help familiarize you with some of the words you may hear...*

**Basket weave:** A technique of decorating cakes with piping that uses vertical and horizontal lines interwoven, resembling a wicker basket.

**Butter-cream:** Icing and occasionally a filling made from butter. It is known for its smooth, creamy texture that is easy to cut through. It is used for piping, swags, borders, and ornamental rosettes. It is subject to heat exposure and in heat or humidity may melt.

**Cornelli:** A technique for piping that creates an elaborate lace-like pattern.

**Dotted Swiss:** A technique for piping that creates random patterns from tiny dots similar to fine-dot Swiss fabric.

**Dragees:** Decorative round sugar balls usually coated with silver or gold.

**Fondant:** Icing created from sugar, corn syrup, and gelatin that is rolled flat and draped over the cake. The smooth, sweet elastic surface creates a porcelain finish and provides a solid base for

gum paste flowers, decorative details, and architectural designs. It is not wise to refrigerate a fondant cake.

*Ganache:* Icing or filling made from chocolate and heavy cream which is denser than mousse yet less dense from fudge. The sweet, rich consistency will soften in heat and humidity.

*Gum paste:* A paste created from sugar, cornstarch, and gelatin that is fashioned into edible shapes resembling fruits and flowers that are used to garnish the cake.

*Latticework:* A technique of piping that creates an open pattern of criss-crosses.

*Marzipan:* A paste created from sugar, ground almonds, and egg whites that is fashioned into edible shapes resembling fruits and flowers that are used to decorate the cake. It can also make into sheets, similar to fondant, for use as icing.

*Pillars:* Plastic or wood separators used to create the different levels of a tiered cake.

*Piping:* Decorative details like leaves, borders, basket-weave patterns, and flowers that are created by the use of icing, a pastry bag, and an assortment of metal tips.

*Pulled sugar:* Boiled sugar which is pulled and manipulated into shapes resembling bows and flowers.

*Royal icing:* Icing made from confectionary sugar and egg whites that is soft when piped through a pastry bag and becomes hard and brittle upon drying. It is used to make beading, flowers, bows, and latticework. Like fondant, it should not be refrigerated.

*Torte:* A dessert made without leavening agents such as baking powder or baking soda, resulting in a dense cake.

*Whipped cream:* A thick icing and filling made from beaten heavy cream. It is very susceptible to heat and humidity and should be kept refrigerated.

## **Wedding Cake Styles**

*Understanding and identifying the various styles associated with weddings is important...Here is a look at Cake Design styles...*

There are generally three styles of wedding cake design: **Traditional, Modern, and Custom.**

**Traditional:** This style of wedding cake is usually round with approximately three tiers. The cake is usually vanilla-flavored with butter-cream icing.

**Modern:** This style of wedding cake may be square or heart-shaped with multiple tiers.

**Custom:** This style of wedding cake can be designed to meet your specific vision. The cost is more but you'll be able to personalize your wedding day even more.

## **What to Look For**

*It is sometimes difficult to know what makes a quality wedding vendor...we've provided a guide to help you identify the key things to look for to insure that perfect cake...*

Inspecting the work of a wedding cake baker is important.

- ✓ Design: Do the “traditional” cakes look traditional? Do the “modern” cakes look progressive?
- ✓ Do the “custom” cakes look unique?
- ✓ Decoration: Is there creative use of decorations ranging from piping to sugar flowers?
- ✓ Taste: Does the sample taste good? Is it fresh and moist?

## **New Trends**

*Wedding trends change and evolve with each New Year...we've provided a run-down of the newest, hottest trends in wedding cake design...*

Custom cakes are a new trend for weddings. Cakes can be made into just about any shape, including the Eiffel Tower!

Cake shapes have evolved beyond the traditional round cakes. Popular shapes include square, rectangular, or heart-shaped.

## **Standard Package/Options**

*Certain standard features are a part of the wedding cake...There are also several creative options to consider when personalizing your wedding dessert...Check out our guide to understanding what defines the “typical” wedding cake along with which options are available from most wedding cake designers...*

### **Standard Package**

Traditional cakes are usually round in shape.

Most cake designers charge per slice. Some do charge by the cake but you should address this issue with your cake designer.

Some cake designers will include delivery of the cake to the reception site. For others, this is an option. It is very wise to confirm this detail with the cake designer.

### **Options**

- ✓ Specialty-Shaped Cake: Cakes can also be square, rectangular, heart-shaped, or theme shaped.
- ✓ Multiple Tiers
- ✓ Specialty Flavors
- ✓ Specialty Fillings
- ✓ Custom Cake Design
- ✓ Rental items like plastic cake tiers and cake stand.
- ✓ Groom's Cake

- ✓ Cake delivery may be included in your overall wedding cake price or it may be an option. *Ask your cake designer to clarify which plan they offer.*

## **Keys to Success**

*Here are some expert tips to make sure your wedding cake experience is the best it possibly can be...*

When going to meet your cake designer for the first time, take pictures of cakes you like.

When you confirm your guest totals for your reception, call your cake designer to let them know as well. This total will affect the size of cake(s) to be baked.

Try to pick flavor combinations that a majority of your guests will enjoy. Some popular flavors include carrot, German chocolate, chocolate mousse or vanilla cakes with lemon, raspberry, or vanilla custard.

Consider having different flavors for different tiers. This costs a bit more but is an excellent touch, and makes all your guests happy.

As a general rule, three tiers serve approximately 50 to 100 people. If your reception is for over 200 guests, consider a five-tiered cake.

Make sure the baker doesn't make your cake too far in advance of your reception. Like anything else, cakes do "age". Ideally, you want your cake made on the day of your reception.

Have the cake delivered to your reception site. Some companies include this in your overall price, others charge for it. Either way, it's a valuable service, especially considering how precious the cargo is and how busy your wedding day will be.

## **Questions for the Cake Designer**

*When you meet with your prospective wedding cake designer, you'll want to ask all the right questions...We've provided a list of what you should make sure to ask when you first speak with them about your wedding...This will give you a good indication of their level of service as well...*

1. Does the cake designer specialize in wedding cakes? We recommend 30% or more of their business is wedding cakes.

---

2. How many years have they been baking wedding cakes? We recommend the company has a minimum of three years experience.

---

3. Does the designer do custom cakes or do you choose from specific styles?

---

4. What types of ingredients are utilized?

---

5. When, in relation to your wedding day, will the cake be made? We recommend finding a baker who bakes the cake no more than one day prior to the wedding day.

---

6. How many staff will work on your cake? Is it one person, a baker and designer, more? We recommend choosing a company who has a separate designer and baker.

---

7. How many wedding cakes are prepared a weekend?

---

8. Does the cake designer work with floral designers to decorate the cake?

---

9. How are the cakes priced? By the slice or per cake?

---

10. Is there special pricing for different fillings and/or flavors?

---

11. Is the top tier of the cake included or extra?

---

12. Does the cake baker have a state health department license?

---

13. Is cake delivery included? If Not, How much extra does it cost?

---

## **Things to Avoid**

*Knowing the pitfalls and traps ahead of time can help save you money, time, and your sanity...Here's a list of things to avoid when planning your wedding cake design...*

If you're having an outdoor reception, especially a daylight affair, avoid using icings like Buttercream and Whipped Cream. They will melt under hot, humid conditions.

Do not put a cake with fondant icing in the refrigerator.

If you are having fresh flowers for cake decorations, check with your florist to make certain that they have not been sprayed with pesticide.

As a rule, it is generally wise to avoid a cake baker who does not have a state health department license. *An obvious exception would be if a mother or grandmother bakes the cake.*

If you're trying to save some money, a good idea is to pass on baking a Groom's Cake.

Another option to saving money is having a smaller tiered cake with a sheet cake providing the rest of the servings.

The tradition is to keep the top tier of your wedding cake for your first wedding anniversary. *Most cake designers are willing to bake you a copy of your cake top for that first anniversary.*

## References

There are several resources available to check the references of a particular wedding cake designer:

- ✓ Family and friends who have recently been married.
- ✓ Better Business Bureau (B.B.B.).
- ✓ Local Resorts/Country Clubs.
- ✓ Other local wedding vendors like your caterer and venue coordinator.

## Contract/Payment

*Knowing what to include in a contract with a wedding cake designer is important... We've created a list of critical points to consider...*

### Contract

- ✓ Name and contact information for you and the cake designer.
- ✓ Wedding date, time, and location.
- ✓ Date and exact location where the cake is to be picked up or delivered.
- ✓ Name of person picking up or delivering the cake.
- ✓ Detailed description of the cake including: Flavor, fillings, icing, decorations, number of tiers, shape, and cake topper/finial.
- ✓ List of rental items (e.g. plastic cake tiers, cake stand, etc.), if applicable.
- ✓ Delivery and setup fees, if applicable.
- ✓ Total estimated cost.
- ✓ Deposit amount due.
- ✓ Balance and balance due date.
- ✓ Cancellation and refund policy.
- ✓ Cake designer's signature
- ✓ Your signatures.

### Payment

- ✓ Pay Deposit
- ✓ Pay Remaining Balance
- ✓ Cancellation Policy

## Backup Plans

*Having a "Plan B" is always a good idea when it comes to planning your wedding... Here's a look at some ways to cover your bases...*

**Backup Location:** If you need to move your reception at the last minute and your cake is being delivered to your site by the cake designer, then make certain to contact the baker with the new location address, phone, and directions.

**Backup Cake Designer:** Keep your second choice wedding cake designer's information nearby in case of a last minute change in vendor.

## Checklists

### Styles

- Traditional Style
- Modern Style
- Custom Style

### Keys to Success

- Bring Pictures of Cakes
- Guest List Total to Baker
- Select Flavor Combinations
- Multiple Flavors
- Decide on Number of Tiers
- Confirm Cake Baking Schedule
- Confirm Cake Delivery

### Things to Avoid

- Avoid Butter-cream and Whipped Cream for Outdoors in Daytime
- Avoid Refrigeration of Fondant Icing
- Use Pesticide-free Fresh Flowers
- Check for Health Department License
- Determine Groom's Cake Needs
- Anniversary Cake

### Timeline

- Interview Cake Designers
- Decide Cake Style
- Choose Cake Flavor
- Select Icing
- Determine Size
- Assign Family Member to Return
- Rental Items
- Enjoy Top Tier
- Anniversary Cake

### What to Look For

- Study Cake Designs
- Study Decorations
- Taste Cake

### Standard Package/Options

- Specialty Cake
- Multiple Tiers
- Special Flavors
- Special Fillings
- Custom Design
- Groom's Cake

### Contract/Payment

- Review Contract
- Revise Contract
- Sign Contract

- Pay Deposit
- Pay Balance

**Backup Plans**

- Backup Location
- Backup Cake Designer

**Wedding Cake Worksheet**

**Finalize Decoration Style**

- Piping
- Sugar Flowers
- Fresh Flowers

**Choose Icing Type**

- Butter-cream
- Marzipan
- Fondant

**Cake Style**

- Traditional
- Unique

**Decorations**

- Ornate
- Simple

**Shape**

- Round
- Square
- Heart-shaped
- Cupcakes
- Custom

**Construction**

- Sheet Cake
- Tiered, stacked
- Tiered, with columns

**Use**

- Centerpiece for Dessert Table
- Primary Dessert

**Ornamentation**

- Fresh Flower Garnish
- Sugar Flower Decorations
- Piping
- Cornelli
- Dotted Swiss
- Dragees
- Latticework
- Theme elements
- Topper: \_\_\_\_\_
- Flavors: \_\_\_\_\_
- Colors: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

**Wedding Cake Budget:** \_\_\_\_\_

○ Groom's Cake: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Flavors: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Number of Slices: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Groom's Cake Budget: \_\_\_\_\_

○ Number of Guests: \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Wedding Cake & Groom's Cake Budget:** \_\_\_\_\_

www.suenterertainment.com

This guide is provided by Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment to assist new couples as they navigate their way through the year leading up to their wedding day. Included are only suggestions and ultimate decisions need to be made by the couple. Spirit Unlimited Professional DJ Entertainment is not responsible for negative outcomes as a result of following guidelines.