

It's Summer, Summer, Summertime...

by Vangie De La Concha

Florida's beautiful weather, gorgeous hotels, parks and many miles of coastline are perfect for outdoor venues. When considering your options, you will want to look at several factors to make sure you get the most enjoyment out of your special day.

First, it's important to have a good idea of the number of out-of-town guests that will be attending. Many families plan their vacations this time of year and hotels book quickly. You may want to select a hotel for your guests and book enough rooms for them well in advance.

If you are planning an outdoor wedding, select an alternate venue in the event of inclement weather. Florida is notorious for its sunshine, but also for its sudden and extreme downpours. By having a backup plan, you can easily move the ceremony inside and keep your guests dry and happy.

Besides rain, sunshine, heat and humidity are other factors you must consider for your outdoor wedding. Tents should be used to cover your guests during the ceremony. Plan to have them set up at least 48 hours in advance to reduce ground moisture. Fashionable umbrellas can be used to escort your guests from one staging area to the next, and to shield them from the sun or rain. Extreme heat can prove uncomfortable during an outdoor wedding so try to plan your ceremony at the coolest part of the day. Another nice touch is to give each guest a *program fan*. The guests not only have a keepsake, but a way to move the air around – which can sometimes be stifling in the Florida humidity.

Always include in the invitation whether or not your wedding will be outdoors. This will ensure that your guests can dress appropriately and be able to fully enjoy their surroundings. If you have a dress recommendation, include that as well.

Speaking of attire, for beachfront weddings, the bride's attire should be simple, elegant and flowing. Many great designers are creating gowns specifically for outdoor weddings and the choices are endless. A splash of vibrant color is very popular, not only for the bride's gown but also her shoes.



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When deciding on the overall design for your ceremony and reception, your personal style and taste are what matters most. When in doubt, simple elegance is always the way to go. For outdoor weddings, work with the surroundings to enhance them, not overpower them. Be creative, use fresh fruits, seashells, pebbles or sand and candles mixed with flowers that will hold up well in the heat. This season you will find that limes, pinks and yellows will be used in many floral designs with fewer greens to bring out the true texture and personality of the flowers.

The key to your successful wedding or any special event is to plan and budget properly. Choose a professional wedding and event planner that is experienced and tuned in to your particular needs. Twenty years from now, you will look back with pride and happiness and fond memories of your perfect wedding.

Vangie De La Concha is a wedding and special event planner, designer and strategist. Her clients include MasterCard, Goya Foods, Coca-Cola and many happy brides.

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