

Benefits and Etiquette of Save the Date Cards

Wedding planning has consumed the past year or more of your life. Full of milestone tasks and concrete deadlines, your schedule becomes more and more hectic as the months wear on. In the midst of your frenzied agenda, it is easy to forget that the guests you want to invite also struggle with their own daily schedules.

Today, people often plan vacations, business trips, family outings and church events at least four to six months in advance. To ensure your guests include your wedding on their calendars, they need to know about it first. But if your invitations go out only six weeks prior to the wedding, your window of opportunity for an acceptance may have long since past.

The solution comes in the form of save the date cards-also known as save the date invitations. Coming in many varieties, couples send save the date cards about six months in advance of the wedding. These cards let people know the date and location of your wedding so they plan ahead to keep the date free.

Because save the date cards are a relatively new wedding tradition, the rules of etiquette for them are still being written. It is certain, though, that you must make sure every person who gets a save the date card also gets an invitation. But should you send them to every guest on your invitation list?

Experts recommend sending save the date cards to as many of the guests on your list as possible, especially those who will be traveling from out of town.

Formal vs Informal

These cards-which vary in type from save the date postcards, save the date photo cards, save the flat cards with matching formal invitations to save the date magnets-are less formal than your actual invitations. For this reason, you can relax your style when designing them.

This means using simple wording. In your formal invitations, you may choose to write your entire wedding date in words: The Twenty-Fifth Day of June Two Thousand and Seven. However, because save the date cards are less formal, it is acceptable to write the numeric date of your wedding: June 25, 2007.

As you struggle to choose every element on your formal invitation, the save the date invitations can simply announce the date and location of your wedding. If you choose, you may decide to provide out-of-town guests with accommodation and transportation information on or with these cards.

It is imperative to include "Formal Invitation to Follow" at the bottom of your save the date invitation. This will make sure none of the recipients mistake the save the date card for the formal invitation.

Setting the Stage

Some designers say that they must match your invitations or planned decor. However, others say it is not necessary to be in the same style of the rest of your wedding.

To decide what's best for you, keep in mind that people will see these cards as your way of setting the stage for your event. Even though they may not be designed in your wedding's colors or theme, you may want to ensure your save the date cards are an appropriate reflection of your planned wedding.

For example, if you plan a formal evening gala, your save the date cards may include cursive text atop a couple decked in formal attire dancing across a ballroom floor. However, if your wedding will be more of a casual, festive celebration, then a picture of you and your future spouse having fun might be more appropriate.

As save the date invitations become more popular, there are a growing number of options available. Magnets, scratch off cards, announcement postcards and inserts into your Christmas cards are all being used today.

With the many styles and options now available and the few firm etiquette rules surrounding them, you will have an easy time finding save the date cards that match your own unique tastes.