

# CHICAGO BRIDE

## 10 (Cheap) Ways to Throw a Unique Wedding

No one wants a cookie-cutter wedding. The day you tie the knot should be as unique as your individual personalities. There's a quote that says, "The universe is not made of atoms. It's made of tiny stories." Just as you're coming together as man-and-wife, allow your creativity to spill into the details you're sharing on your wedding day.

### 1. Craft a story.

Telling your story as a couple as you approach the altar is a powerful way to connect with your guests and chronicle your journey to this point. Think of every element of your wedding—from the invites to the wedding favors—as a chance to craft a story from beginning to happily ever after. Don't be afraid to incorporate religious or ethnic touches that are special to you.

### 2. Pick a theme.

A well-executed theme can add loads of personality to your wedding day without looking cheesy—like these [Lego, hockey](#) and [50s-themed weddings](#). By picking a theme that's already a hobby or interest, you're likely to already own a lot of materials you can incorporate into the decor.

### 3. Pick a repeating element.

If a theme is a bit much for your taste, focus on one element you can repeat throughout the printed materials, decor and attire for big impact, like these [feathers](#) or parasols.

### 4. Go handmade.

Making decor by hand ensures that the look of your wedding is one-in-a-million. Consider paper or fabric flowers (like [these cuties](#)) or buy a [custom wedding stamp](#) to personalize all your paper goods.

### 5. Shop vintage.

Shopping for vintage or thrift items for your wedding and reception may save you some time and headache over everything handmade. A vintage wedding dress customized with modern accessories could be the thing that makes your wedding stand out and memorable.

### 6. Register for gift cards.

[Create a wedding registry online](#) at CardAvenue and register for the stores you most like to shop at nationwide, instead of just one or two generic ones that offer wedding registries.

### 7. Mix-and-match.

Stick closely to your theme but allow variations to create a unique look and feel. Think non-matching bridesmaids dresses and a menagerie of vintage vases of differing sizes in the same hue as centerpieces.

### 8. Re-imagine the guest book.

Set up an iPad to record or photograph guests as they enter, or set up something unique for your guests to sign that you'll incorporate into your home decor later (a signed vintage map from your

location, smooth rocks you can use in a clear vase). In our fall wedding we scattered colored paper leaves on the welcome table and pens and used the leaves in our wedding scrapbook.

#### **9. Festive food.**

Marry at a non-traditional time or place and you can pull off a unique reception for cheap. Think coffee bar & pastries for a mid-morning wedding, or a Memorial Day wedding on the lake for a laid-back barbecue dinner.

#### **10. Send off in style.**

Forget bubbles, sparklers and bird seed (some venues won't even allow them due to the cleanup involved). Offer wrapped candy for tossing (which the kids are sure to clean up without complaining), release balloons or have your guests create a human arch or a large paper banner for you run through. For a nighttime wedding, fireworks or glow sticks create a fun and colorful goodbye.



Weddings expert Cara Davis is the author of [Cheap Ways to Tie the Knot](#) and blogs from her home in Orlando, FL, about cheap ways to spend and save at [www.CheapWaysTo.com](http://www.CheapWaysTo.com).

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