









# Make it a special mother/son dance

Weddings celebrate the unions of happy couples ready to pledge their lives to each other. In theory, the wedding day spotlight should be shared equally by brides and grooms. But brides often eclipse their grooms, as guests are drawn to stunning bridal gowns.

Though grooms might play second fiddle for much of their wedding days, there is one moment when all eyes are on the groom and a special lady in his life. The mother/son dance is a tradition that many grooms embrace as their opportunity to show their mothers how much they love and appreciate them. The mother/son dance is an ideal time to create a special moment, and the following are some tips to personalize the dance.

**Precede the bride and her father.** Make your own tradition and switch up the timing of the dances. Be the first to take a spin on the dance floor and set the tone for the other traditional songs to come.

**Create a photo montage.** Work with an entertainment company or photographer to create a slideshow of images showing you and your mother together and separately. If possible, include some photos that were shot during the wedding ceremony, asking the photographer to capture the look on your mother's face during pivotal moments of the ceremony.

**Show off your dance skills.** One increasingly popular wedding trend is to choreograph dances. Here's an opportunity for grooms and their mothers



to show off their stellar dance moves.

Give mom the opportunity to express her sentiments to you, let her choose the song as mothers of the groom do not typically toast their sons during weddings or even rehearsal dinners.

**Invite other son/mother duos up.** If the idea of dancing alone with your mother is a bit intimidating, give other mothers in attendance an opportunity to share the spotlight. Celebrate all mothers in attendance, encouraging any mothers and sons who are present to dance together.

Grooms may not garner the bulk of guests' attention on their wedding days. But they can take steps to make their special dances with their mothers more memorable and unique.

# Toss aside the bouquet and reinvent the tradition

Enjoyable wedding events are full of traditions that are built into the day. Tradition lends familiarity to the proceedings and serves as unwritten cues for guests.

Certain traditions invite guest participation making great memories for both couples and their guests. However, that doesn't mean couples can't put their own unique spin on things.

In a 2015 Jezebel poll of about 4,500 readers, 19 percent supported having a bouquet toss, but 81 percent were against it, suggesting that this tradition is ready for some updating.

The bouquet toss traces its origins to Olde English times. In those days, women used to try to rip pieces of the bride's dress and flowers in order to obtain some of her good luck. To escape from the crowd, the bride would toss her bouquet and run



away. The bouquet is tossed with the idea that whoever catches it will be the next to marry. Today, however, some single women are no longer interested in finding matches at a wedding and view the bouquet toss as an archaic tradition. Others dislike the expectation that they stand on the dance floor with the hopes of finding a spouse.

For couples who want to embrace the traditional bouquet toss while giving it a more modern twist, consider the following suggestions.

**Girls-only dance:** Invite all the women out on the floor - not just the single ones - and play a female-centric empowerment song or one that mentions ladies having a good time. This puts the emphasis on having fun rather than finding a spouse.

**Attach a prize to the toss.** To encourage people to participate, explain that the bouquet- and garter-toss winners

get prizes - and that the prize has nothing to do with finding a partner.

**Anniversary countdown:** Invite all of the married couples to the center of the dance floor. The DJ or band can play a beautiful love song and count up the years as the song plays. As each year is mentioned, couples leave the dance floor after their most recent anniversary has passed. The last couple on the dance floor marks the couple who has been married the longest. That couple gets to take home the bouquet.

**A bridal piñata.** Guests can take turns hitting a bouquet-shaped piñata. It's fun and entertaining and doesn't discriminate on age or marital status.

With a little ingenuity, the traditional bouquet toss can be reborn into something more fun and memorable.

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# Six reasons to dine out this Valentine's day

Valentine's Day is celebrated in various ways throughout the world. One of the more popular methods of spending time with a romantic partner is over a delicious meal at a nice restaurant.

Statistics Brain says that 34.6 percent of Valentine's Day celebrants in the United States dine outside of the home, making this day dedicated to couples one of the most popular days to dine out all year.

Dining out on Valentine's Day helps to make the day more special, and the following are a number of additional reasons why couples should enjoy a meal out this February 14.

**1. Embrace the chance to try new foods.** Dining out gives individuals the opportunity to try new cuisine they may not attempt at home. This is a chance to expand flavor profiles and give something new a chance.

**2. Enjoy creative plating.** Many restaurants expend extra effort on

presentation on Valentine's Day, dressing the plates with special garnish or with a unique presentation of the foods. Valentine's Day meals are often as beautiful to look at as they are delicious to eat.



Experiencing such visual masterpieces can add to the enjoyment of the night out.

**3. Enjoy a night off from cooking.** One of the biggest benefits of dining out

on Valentine's Day is enjoying an evening away from the kitchen. Heading out for a restaurant meal means no stressing over what to cook for dinner, no wrangling with ingredients and no post-meal cleanup.

**4. Learn something new.** Chefs and restaurants may pull out all the stops for a special occasion like Valentine's Day. Diners may learn more about exotic foods

and wine pairings on Valentine's Day than they might when dining out on less popular nights.

**5. Beat the winter blues.** For much of the country, Valentine's Day occurs during a time of year when winter is at its most harsh. Wintertime can be isolating as many people spend increased hours indoors to avoid inclement weather. Dining out gives couples the opportunity to get some fresh air and dine in a social environment that can help buoy spirits.

**6. Jump start other activities.** Dining at a restaurant may be the precursor to other things to come on Valentine's Day. While out, couples may opt to head to a movie, enjoy some local live theater or stroll through a museum gallery. A good meal can make for the perfect starter to a memorable Valentine's Day.

Dining out on Valentine's Day is a tradition that can benefit couples in various ways and make an already special holiday that much more memorable.

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## Romantic films to watch with your valentine

· *Beauty and the Beast* (1991): This animated classic tells the tale of a prince who is disfigured into a beast to outwardly represent his internal ugliness. Fans of the animated film will have another opportunity to fall in love again with the live-action retelling of the story set for release in March 2017.

· *Once* (2007): A modern-day busker in Dublin has a chance meeting with a Czech immigrant. The two begin to collaborate musically and a romance blossoms.

· *Say Anything* (1989): In a tale of first love, Lloyd seeks to capture the heart of Diane, who is an unattainable high school beauty.

· *The Notebook* (2004): Based on Nicholas Sparks' novel of the same name, this modern cult classic is set in 1940s South Carolina.

· *When Harry Met Sally* (1989): Close friends Harry and Sally have known each other for years and ponder if an intimate relationship would ruin the friendship.

· *Gone With the Wind* (1939): This sweeping epic is set in the antebellum south during the American Civil War. · *Sense and Sensibility* (1995): This film is a dramatic interpretation of Jane Austen's novel published in 1811. · *Roman Holiday* (1953): A European princess is disillusioned with her life and needs an escape.

· *The Princess Bride* (1987): Wesley and Buttercup begin with a tumultuous servant-master relationship. A classic and often hilarious tale of romance.

· *Casablanca* (1943): A nightclub owner in Casablanca is reunited with his old flame, only to discover she is traveling with her husband.

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