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The Knot 2021 Real Weddings Study Marks the Height of the Wedding Boom

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Largest Study of its Kind Finds Weddings are Shifting Back to 'Normal' as Widely Available Vaccines and Testing Make it Possible to Host Events without Delay

2022 Marks the Height of the Wedding Boom as Couples Confidently Move Forward with Celebrations, According to The Knot Real Weddings Study

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NEW YORK, NY—February 14, 2022—****During the second year of weddings amidst the global pandemic, 2022 is set to host the most weddings in recent history, 2.6 million*, as couples and wedding professionals continue to adapt by prioritizing health and safety to move forward with celebrations, including those that were postponed from 2020. Today, [The Knot](#), an authority in wedding planning, advice and resources, released [The Knot 2021 Real Weddings Study](#), the largest study of its kind capturing responses from more than 15,000 couples who were married in 2021.

The study revealed that many factors impacted by COVID in 2020 are back to pre-pandemic numbers; only 10% of couples needed to change their wedding location in 2021 (45% in 2020) and in 2022, 98% of those set to wed are [confident their wedding will take place as scheduled](#). Guest count started to rebound by the end of 2021 (110 in the second half of the year) and the 2022 average guest count is expected to be on par with pre-pandemic guest size at 129.

2021 Weddings At a Glance:

- In 2021, 85% of couples incorporated at least one health and safety measure into their wedding, with three on average.
- On average in 2021, couples spent \$34,000 total on their wedding, including ceremony, reception and engagement ring, back in line with 2019 spend.
- Couples who wed in 2021 were engaged for an average of 16 months and 75% of those who got engaged in 2021 have already set a date for 2022.
- 75% of couples utilized digital wedding planning platforms, like [The Knot](#), and 84% created a [wedding website](#) to share their wedding details with guests.
- On average, couples hired 14 wedding professionals - from florists to planners - to help them plan and execute their weddings.
- 22% of weddings took place in October, and four of the five most popular 2021 wedding dates were during this month.

"Couples, guests and wedding pros alike are demonstrating how far we've come in the last two years as the desire to celebrate is stronger than ever. This year will not only be the year with the most weddings in recent history but also starts to welcome the next generation of couples - Gen Zers - getting married," said Lauren Kay, Executive Editor of The Knot. "Gen Z is a uniquely diverse generation and particularly eco-focused; as a result, we're seeing personalization take center stage like never before."

Looking Ahead to 2022 Weddings

Looking ahead, 75% of couples who got engaged in 2021 have already set a date for 2022. Summer and fall will continue to be the most popular seasons to get married with 65% of couples choosing to wed during this timeframe. For the sixth year running, October is poised to be the most popular month to get married (17%) with October 22, 2022 as the busiest date.

Ninety-eight percent of those set to wed in 2022 are confident their wedding will take place as scheduled. While the reality of Omicron is top of mind, couples feel confident that they can move forward with their wedding plans and 81% will implement at least one health or safety

measure on their wedding day. Providing hand sanitizer is the most common (53%), followed by requiring staff to wear masks (40%). Sixteen percent of couples will require testing or for guests to be vaccinated (30%). The average guest size in 2022 is projected to return to pre-pandemic numbers at 129 (131 guests in 2019).

2021 Weddings by the Numbers

December marked the most popular month to get engaged (20%). The most popular seasons to get married were summer and fall, with 77% of weddings taking place during this timeframe. In 2021, October took the top spot as the most popular month to get married (22%) with four of the top five wedding dates falling in this month.

Rebounding to pre-pandemic numbers, the average total cost of a wedding, including the engagement ring, was \$34,000. The cost of a wedding is impacted by several factors, including geographical location, number of vendors hired and number of guests, among others. Couples in New York City spent an average of \$84,000 on their total wedding cost, while couples in Denver spent \$31,000 including the engagement ring. The average age a couple got married was 34 (33 for women, 35 for men) and over 50% of couples dated for two to five years before becoming engaged.**

Health and Safety Remains Top of Mind

According to the study, health and safety measures remained top-of-mind in 2021 with 85% of couples incorporating at least one health and safety measure into their wedding. The average guest count in 2021 was 105 guests (compared to 131 in 2019), though numbers differed in the first half of the year compared to the second half due to vaccine availability and weather. Average guest count for January through June weddings was 94 compared to 110 guests for July through December events. Couples in the Midwest averaged the highest number of guests in 2021 at 128, whereas weddings in the West had the smallest average count at 90. On average, 17% of couples provided a virtual viewing option for guests unable to attend in person.

As vaccines became more widely available and travel became less restrictive, 73% of couples who married in 2021 were able to carry forward with their original wedding date, while the remaining 27% were couples who were initially slated to get married in 2020 (most who postponed from fall and summer of 2020, 60%). Of the 27% that had to postpone until 2021, 81% had delayed both their ceremony and reception, while 19% had delayed the reception only. Nearly 20% of weddings in 2021 were destination weddings (up 10% from 2020) - meaning outside of a couple's hometown or where they currently reside - and about half of those destination weddings were hosted in international locations. This is back in line with pre-pandemic numbers for destination weddings (21% in 2019).

Wedding Pros Lead the Way

As COVID restrictions continue to evolve, wedding professionals are more prepared than ever before to navigate unforeseen changes and guide their couples through any situation. The average engagement lasts 16 months (24 months for those that needed to postpone) and nearly 50% of couples agreed that planning a wedding during COVID was one of the biggest challenges. Couples enlisted an average of 14 wedding professionals to assist in planning, which is back in line with 2019 levels (15 vendors). The top wedding professionals couples hired were for the wedding dress (93%) and venue (88%). When choosing their team of wedding professionals to help plan, couples relied heavily on reviews on platforms like [The Knot Vendor Marketplace](#), with over 70% of couples indicating reviews were very important when deciding which vendors to contact.

Couples Prioritize Personalized Experiences & Sustainability

Personalization continues to be a priority for couples who want their wedding day to be a true reflection of themselves and their relationship (59%, up 4% from 2019). One in five couples marry someone with a background different to their own and 60% find it important to incorporate their ethnicity, religion and/or culture into their celebration. Couples are further personalizing their reception with food and beverage options, such as signature drinks (36%, up from 29% in 2019), late-night snack options (26%) and dessert options other than cake (61%). It is also increasingly important to couples to be conscious of the environmental impact of weddings, as nearly 70% say they did/will put some or significant effort into incorporating sustainable elements into their day, such as opting for [recycled paper invitations](#), renting items and minimizing food waste.

Guest Experience Takes the Cake

Findings from the 2021 Wedding Guest Study*** indicate that guests looked forward to weddings more than ever, as 50% said they loved attending weddings (up from 39% in 2019), while 68% of guests were also willing to spend more on weddings (as a result of a year+ quarantine)—most commonly spending more on gifts from the [couple's registry](#). On average, guests spent \$160 on a wedding gift in 2021 (up from \$120 in 2019), with the average overall cost of attending a wedding being \$460. In return, 73% of couples wanted to ensure that their guests are well taken care of. The study found couples spent on average \$266 per guest, up from \$214 in 2019, offering guests open bars (79%), champagne toasts (51%), interactive food experiences (11%) and personalized favors to round out the night (56%). To keep the party going, 27% of couples hosted an after party following the reception and 26% of couples hosted a day-after brunch for guests.

Visit [TheKnot.com](#) for more information on [The Knot 2021 Real Weddings Study](#).

Methodology

The Knot 2021 Real Weddings Study captured responses from more than 15,200 U.S. couples married between January 1 and December 31, 2021; respondents were recruited via email invitation from The Knot Worldwide. Survey respondents represent a variety of ethnic, education and income levels, and are geographically dispersed.

About The Knot

The Knot is an authority on wedding planning and advice, offering a seamless, all-in-one solution—from finding inspiration and local vendors to creating and managing all guest experiences, wedding registries, invitations and more. The trusted brand reaches a majority of engaged couples in the US through the #1 wedding planning website TheKnot.com and #1 iOS and Android mobile app The Knot Wedding Planner, The Knot national wedding magazine, and The Knot book series. Since its inception, The Knot has inspired approximately 25 million couples to plan a wedding that's uniquely them. Visit The Knot online at TheKnot.com and follow on social media: Facebook.com/TheKnot and @TheKnot on Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram.

**Estimate based upon The Knot Worldwide COVID pulse surveys of more than 7,500 engaged couples conducted in 2020-2021 and U.S. Census Bureau data.*

***The Knot 2021 Jewelry & Engagement Study.*

****The Knot Worldwide 2021 Wedding Guest Study.*

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