

# HONEY LET'S ELOPE!

*YOU DO NOT ALWAYS NEED A PLAN.  
NOTHING FANCY  
JUST LOVE*

Have you ever heard about a couple eloping without telling anyone or secretly getting married, at the courthouse? It may seem like big weddings are the only way to get married, but eloping is not an uncommon practice or taboo these days. In fact, some couples even choose romantic places or interesting destinations to elope to. This can make the celebration both cheap and merry. While the technical definition of eloping is "running away," it has a slightly more nuanced definition in wedding terms. Eloping means to get married without telling anyone, especially your parents. To elope may also suggest that you forgo a formal wedding and elope for the ceremony instead. In modern times, eloping does not necessarily mean running away, and some couples who choose to elope will inform their families before their ceremony (though not always invite them to attend). There are many reasons why couples decide to elope. One of the more common is because their parents or families do not approve of the union. Typically, weddings are an occasion when the family comes together. If genuine approval is not received from parents on either side of the family, a couple may decide to not have a wedding at all and elope instead.

Another possible reason is that the couple may feel that they don't have enough money for a traditional wedding. Weddings can be stressful and expensive to plan. If a couple does not have the funds, they may choose to elope to reduce the stress and financial burden. Other couples may decide that they would rather save the money for their future instead of spending it on a lavish wedding. Finally, another possible reason to elope is that the bride may be pregnant, though this should never be assumed. In some cases, the couple may decide that they do not want to wait to plan a wedding ceremony and prefer to be married before the baby is born.

Forgoing a large, traditional wedding to elope, does not necessarily mean completely skipping a ceremony or reception to celebrate the occasion. Sometimes, couples who elope, simply want to have a more intimate and quiet wedding with a limited number of guests.

No matter if it is just a few people or a dozen, who witness the couple getting married, there are still a few things to consider. For instance, they may still want to plan to exchange rings and vows or choose wedding-like attire, no matter how casual.





ESSENTIAL  
*Style*

Some couples also like to have photographs to capture the memories. Even flowers can mimic a traditional wedding while keeping things simple.

Other couples may elope to a destination, then return home and host a small reception that includes family and friends to celebrate their union. You might even find couples who exchange vows in front of their guests, even though they're already legally married because they eloped and had a private ceremony first.

Every couple has their personal reasons and definitions of what it means to elope. While some choose an intimate beach setting on a tropical island, others prefer a quick courthouse wedding. There is no right or wrong answer to eloping and it should not be viewed in a negative way. What is most important is that the couple follows their own desires and whatever path makes them happy. For many, the idea of a traditional wedding simply isn't a good fit and they prefer to do it their own way.

Even couples who are choosing to elope, will need to make a few plans to ensure that their ceremony is seamless and legal. Depending on the location, the couple should research the legalities and the local requirements, regarding the issuing of a valid marriage certificate. Some places require an appointment, a waiting time, and designated witnesses to conduct a wedding ceremony or issue a marriage license. The couple will also likely need their birth certificates and official identifications, so if you are planning a destination elopement, be sure to check local laws prior to leaving for your trip.

It is not traditional for couples who elope to register for wedding gifts. If the couple is having a celebration after their private elopement, they may still register for gifts. If you hear about a friend or family member's elopement, it is proper etiquette to send a gift or a card sharing your good wishes. Even though you won't be attending a wedding, this is still a nice practice and allows you to extend warm thoughts to them. Do, prepare yourself, however, for family and close friend's reactions.

The most difficult part of eloping is the fear that your friends and family will be disappointed, that they were not part of your day. So, know that not everyone is going to support your decision, and be prepared for their reactions. A good idea would be to tell both sets of parents, to minimize any hurt feelings.

Also, try and involve your closest friends and family, somehow, whether inviting them to an "after elopement party", or a sharing of photographs first, it is important to make them feel included. Legally, you will need witnesses to make your marriage valid. So you can invite a few close friends or family, to be part of the moment, and still be able to call it an elopement.

I just love the idea of eloping. The notion of sacking off the guest list, the budget spreadsheet, the logistics, and jetting off somewhere exciting to say your vows, just the two of you! What a delightful story for the grandkids! But even if you're opting for a no-frills wedding, planning your elopement still deserves a little thought. You need to figure out where to do it, what to wear, how to make it special, and what to do afterwards, while handling all the emotions that come with it. Of course, you have got to make a plan for telling your parents and pals.

Eloping can be something of a statement in itself, so if you are planning to get married without your friends and family by your side, make sure it's something you really want, and that you are doing it for all the right reasons. Saving money, avoiding fuss, keeping things intimate and personal, or avoiding family drama, are all completely valid reasons to elope, just make sure that you have thought it through, and it is what you both want.

There can be a lot of guilt associated with elopements so this might be easier said than done, but try not to feel bad about your decision, you do not have to justify it to anyone. Of course, some friends and family might be initially disappointed with the idea of not sharing your day with you, but once they get over the shock, chances are, they will be nothing but thrilled to bits for you. I think the adage of "prepare yourself for the worst but expect the best" is key for this. Hopefully everyone will be rooting for you, but try not to be upset if a couple of people are not as excited about your news as you had hoped.

You might want to throw a big party when you get back and let all your friends know you that you eloped, you may want to send out announcement cards, or perhaps you want to quietly tell your nearest and dearest about your good news and leave it at that. However you let people know about your elopement, make a plan. When it comes to parents, siblings and close friends,

it's important that they hear the news from you.

Just because you don't have 120 guests to wine, dine and entertain doesn't mean your elopement should not be special. Whether it is writing personalized vows, splashing out on a fancy limousine, eating wedding cake for breakfast, or going to a Michelin star restaurant for dinner, do whatever it is, that will make your wedding day feel special and truly memorable. The best thing about eloping is that you can do whatever you want, so make sure you do!

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