



Filipino Wedding Traditions and Spanish Influence

Filipino wedding traditions are strongly influenced by Spanish traditions. It is not only Filipino wedding customs but you can observe Spanish influence in all walks of life. It does not mean that Philippines love Spain very much. In fact they have been ruled by the Spanish for more than 350 years.

Filipino brides and grooms are free to choose their partners. The days of the *Pikot* (shotgun marriage) and *Kasunduan* (arranged marriage) have been dispensed with. Unfortunately, you will sadly find that the *Harana* (suitor's serenade) and the *Ligawan* (courtship) have also disappeared. Courtship is, today, mere dating; [love letters](#) are emails and SMS.

Fortunately, the Filipino wedding customs have not be diluted or compromised in any way and is often richly traditional.

The Filipino Wedding Traditions of Pagtatapat (marriage proposal)

You will be interested to know that Filipinos do not pop the question to the bride. They do not ask them "Will you marry me?" They prefer to say "Lets get married!" and if the girl says "Yes" they go ahead with the marriage plans!

The Singsing/Paghingì ng Kamay or the Ring Offering

You know the gift of the ring has a deeper significance in Filipino wedding traditions. The ring signifies a deeper commitment and is a scaled down version of the ancient Filipino custom *dote/ begay-kaya* or dowry offering to the future wife. It is a symbolic request for the girl's hand in marriage or the *paghingì ng kamay*.

The ring is often made up of diamonds. However, you will find that traditional Filipino families may gift the girl the family heirloom as the engagement ring—signifying the approval of the family to the marriage. This ring is often presented during the *pamanhikan* or the meeting of the families.

The Pamanhikan or Engagement

The highlight of the engagement ceremony is naturally, the presentation of the ring by the groom to the bride. Thereafter, you will note that most families get down to discussing the wedding arrangements; drawing up a list of guests and the budget over a meal.

Significantly, the groom's family brings with them a home cooked specialty to share with their hosts after the engagement. Non traditional families may hold the engagement ceremony and the meal at a neutral location such as a hotel or at the home of a mutual acquaintance.

The Filipino Wedding Tradition of Paninilbihan

An interesting fact about Filipino wedding traditions that you will note is the practice of Panninilbihan. This tradition requires the groom to serve the family of the bride and labor for their approval. In ancient days, the chores could involve chopping firewood, fetching water and so on. In the modern days, it is observed as a ritual. The groom visits the girl's home often and he may be requested to do small tasks for the family such as driving the family members to the super market. This is seen as a method of getting to know the groom and welcoming him into the family as a valued member.

Pa-alam or the Wedding Announcement

Before wedding, Pa-alam or wedding announcement to the elders is considered one of the most important Filipino wedding traditions. It is a sign of respect to the elders in the bride's family. You will find Filipino grooms visiting all the persons who matter in the bride's family and informing them of his desire to marry the daughter of the house. The visits are very casual and the blessings of the family members are sought on such occasions. Sometimes this visit is combined with the process of distributing the wedding invitations. The bride and groom also visit their godparents/ principal sponsors with gifts such as baskets of fruit.

Pa-alam or wedding announcement to elders of bride's family is considered a must in Filipino wedding customs...

However, once it is completed, you will find that the couple must visit the family priest or the parish priest as per the Filipino wedding customs. This is especially considered essential if the bride or groom is from a different parish. Interestingly, you will note that the priest is conjoined with the duty of telling the bride and the groom their duties and responsibilities as a husband and wife and also discussing with them the possible impediments to the union.

The Despedida de Soltera or the Bachelorette Party

In Filipino wedding customs it is considered the bride's final goodbye to spinsterhood. You will find that the bride's friends and family host a send off party for the bride. The groom and his friends and family are also invited for the occasion.

The Alay-I tlog kay Sta.Clara

Rain on the wedding day is considered auspicious in Filipino wedding customs. However, the bride and the groom visit the shrine of Sta Clara to offer eggs to the patron saint of good weather praying for a rain free wedding day!

Kasal Kumpisal or the Cleansing ceremony

Most wedding customs demand that the bride and groom go through a cleansing ceremony before they wed. So you will not be surprised to know that the Filipino bride and groom too, are expected to cleanse themselves. The bride and groom go for final confessions a few days before the wedding and partake of the bread and wine during the nuptial mass.

The Wedding Dress and the Ceremony

The bride is often dressed in the White wedding gown that is popular in the west. However, some brides may wear black silk as in the Spanish tradition. The bride carries a bouquet of flowers with orange blossoms and a heirloom rosary.

The groom dresses in a transparent shirt called the barong over a white T shirt and black slacks. The shirt is often elaborately embroidered and made of silk or jusi.

The godfathers, grandfathers, uncles and aunts of the bride and groom stand in two groups on either side of the couple. They are called ninogs and ninangs.

Generally, the wedding ceremony is Catholic. You will find that the ceremony begins with the lighting of the Unity candle. The parents of the bride and groom light one Unity candle each and the two candles so lighted will then be used by the bride and groom to light a single candle also called the Unity candle to symbolize the union of the two families.

Next, two members from the families of the bride and the groom will pin a veil on the shoulder of the groom and drape it over the head of the bride. Another two members will place a lasso or silk chord around the necks of the bride and the groom in the figure of eight. The groom will then give the bride arrhae or thirteen coins which have been blessed by the priest. The above ceremonies you will appreciate, signifies the everlasting bond and love between the bride and the groom and the grooms commitment to dedicate his life to the well being of his spouse and their future children.

When the wedding ceremonies are complete the bride and groom participate in the reception and receive the congratulations of all their family and friends. Food and drink are served and is followed by hours of dancing and merry making.

Ref.: <http://www.muslim-marriage-guide.com/filipino-wedding-traditions.html> & <http://www.muslim-marriage-guide.com/filipino-wedding-customs.html>