

Filipino Pre Wedding Rituals

There is no better way to learn about Filipino culture and traditions than to read the words of a Filipino. In this case, a Filipina. This article is from Jessie, a born and raised Filipina teaches us about marriage culture in the Philippines. Now, from Jessie in her own words...

Pagtatapat (Proposal)

Filipino usually don't know how to pop the most awaited "Will you marry me"? question. Couples usually assume they're gonna get married someday. It is just a matter of 'when'. For Filipinos, "Let's get married!" or Pakasal na tayo! is more likely to be used rather than "Will you marry me". How many of your "girl" friends have been asked that question?

Singsing/Paghingi ng Kamay (Engagement Ring)

The giving of the ring symbolizes the deeper commitment of the couple. Engagement ring concept is a western influence. The local adaptation is more of a practicality than colonial mentality. Engagement ring is also a scaled down version of our forefather's offering of dowry (bigay-kaya) to the future wife. Engagement ring is not usually diamond. Traditional/Sentimental Filipino families would offer a treasured family heirloom as an engagement ring. It also symbolizes his family's approval and her acceptance into their family.

Pamanhikan (The meeting of two families)

Pamanhikan is a treasured Filipino heritage, which avoids the embarrassing situation of having both parents meet as strangers during the wedding day. Meeting of families is often awkward. In the old days, the pamanhikan is hosted by the bride's family as the groom and his family visit them to formally ask their daughter's hand in marriage. But in these modern times and to ease the awkwardness, families opt to hold the meeting in neutral ground like a restaurant. They will discuss the plans for the upcoming wedding, the guest list and the budget. It is customary that the visiting family bring a gift (pasalubong) for the host, it may be a home cooked specialty of the groom's mother.

Paninilbihan (Serving the Family)



Paninilbihan is a tradition wherein the soon-to-be-groom would perform chores to show his worth and responsibility to the bride's family. In the old days, the guy would chop wood (pagsibak ng kahoy) or fetch water (pag-igib ng tubig) for the girls family. Some would say it is a dying tradition. But this ritual is still subconsciously practiced. The guy would replace a busted light, do a little carpentry work, drive the girl's mother to the supermarket and some other small errands for her family. The bride would also do the same for his family, she would usually wash the dishes after dinner, cook or help clean the house.

Pa-alam (Inform the family)

Pa-alam is appreciated by the Filipino elders as a sign of respect. The practice is a round of diplomatic visits or courtesy calls to the people who matters most to the couple. Like the Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles of both parties. The spouse-to-be is introduced to them and formally telling them of the upcoming and wedding and ask for their blessings. It is best to do this at a family gathering to save trips and to hand out the wedding invitations. The soon-to-be-weds also visits their prospective ninongs and ninangs (principal sponsor/godparents) for their wedding. And it is also customary to bring them a little something (pasalubong).

Dulog (Meeting the "Father")

The term "dulog" literally means "approach". This is the time for the soon-to-be-weds to approach their parish priest for a meeting. Dulog is also called Pre-Nuptial interview. It is also a church requirement wherein the priest discusses with the couple of their duties and responsibilities as husband and wife. It also serves as a purpose of finding and possible problems and to determine the couples readiness and knowledge of the doctrine of a Catholic marriage. It is also a good time to ask the priest anything related to the church wedding. Despedida de Soltera (Bachelorette party) Despedida de Soltera is a send-off party hosted by her family held close to the wedding date in honor of the bride-to-be. The groom and his family, the wedding entourage, close friends and relatives from both sides are all invited to meet and to get to know another before the wedding day. It is also a formal introduction of both parties to each other.

Alay-Itlog kay Sta. Clara (Offering eggs to St. Claire)

St. Claire (Sta. Clara) has long been considered the patron saint of good weather. Clara means clear in Spanish. And where does the egg come in to play? Clara de huevo is Spanish for egg white. Despite its pagan origins, marrying Catholic Pinoys offer eggs and prayers to the patron saint of good weather that their wedding day would be rain-free. Eventhough, Rain showers on a wedding day is believed to bring bountiful blessings to the newly weds, but others still prefer a clear and sunny wedding.

Kasal-Kumpisal (confessions)

It is a moral obligation required by the Church of marrying Catholic couple days prior to the wedding to have their final confessions with a priest. It also serves as a spiritual cleansing for the sins committed prior to the Sacrament of Marriage and a commitment and devotion to one's partner.

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