

Filipino Wedding Customs and Traditions

The modern Filipino weddings have strong Western influences, from the white bridal dress to the throwing of the bouquet. This is not surprising since the history of the Filipino people is riddled with foreign cultural input, including Spanish, American and Chinese. However, because Filipino weddings reflect the melting pot tendency of the people, this has resulted in a unique and colorful tradition that marries Eastern and Western beliefs.

Before the white wedding dress became de rigeur for brides in Filipino weddings, the traje de boda or wedding ensemble was primarily the best dress the bride could get her hands on, and did not have to be white. The groom normally wears their best barong, the formal dress of men worn only for important occasions and akin to the Western tuxedo. The entourage consists of at the very least one flower girl, ring bearer, best man, and maid of owner and at least two sets each of principal (ninong and ninangs) and secondary sponsors. In Filipino weddings it is expected that the female entourage members reflect the color scheme (i.e. mint green and ecru are popular colors) while the male members echo the groom's dress.

Many traditions attach to the bride, such as the ban on the wearing of pearls (which symbolizes sadness in the marriage) and getting married in the same year as a sibling (this is referred to as sukob, because this will bring bad luck). Rain is supposed to be lucky for Filipino weddings, as well as broken crockery during the wedding festivities. The reception for Filipino weddings is considered below par if overflowing food and drink is lacking, and no special occasion is complete without the lip-smacking lechon (whole roasted pig). In some provinces, a money dance ensues in which the bride and groom take to the floor and guests compete with each other in pinning the largest amount on the bride's veil or skirt. It is usual for the bride's side to try to outdo the groom's side, although it is all done in the spirit of fun (usually).

Because many Filipinos are Roman Catholics, most Filipino weddings are officiated in the Catholic Church. Garden Filipino weddings are frowned upon because the ceremony is not performed on holy ground.

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