How to Incorporate Filipino Traditions into a Wedding Reception

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Include Filipino traditions in your wedding reception.
Filipino wedding receptions are not so different from traditional American wedding receptions. There are, however, unique festivities that are incorporated into the Filipino celebration or program. From the money dance, which aims to give the married couple a prosperous start, to the dove releasing ceremony, representing a harmonious and loving union, Filipino wedding traditions may seem unusual to some. But if you look a little deeper, you will learn to appreciate the heart-felt symbolism.

Instructions

Things You'll Need

- Two trained doves for release (female and male)
- Bird cage
- Two crowns, money sashes or leis
- Adhesive tape

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   Make sure that the venue you select for your reception will allow doves inside and will permit them to be released in the reception area. If they don't allow this, you may choose to do the dove release outside. You will most likely have to sign a form as part of your contract and agree to certain terms in order for the venue to allow this to happen on their premises.

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  Decide when you want the dove release and money dance to occur during the reception. The dove release usually happens at any time following the banquet. You can decide when it's most appropriate to do this, as every wedding reception has a different flow. It's best to do this after handling any food or cutting the cake for obvious sanitary reasons. Meanwhile, the money dance normally precedes the open dance, when all the guests are invited to the floor. Make sure your DJ or music maestro knows what music will be playing for the duration of the money dance and that the tapes or CDs are in their possession the day of the wedding.

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  Release the doves. The bride should gently take the female dove out of the cage and hold it. The groom does the same with the male dove. The couple should then motion toward each other, bringing the doves' beaks together as if to make the birds kiss. After this, the couple releases the doves at the same time in a gesture that represents the start of a harmonious marriage. Since the doves should be trained, the handler or person in charge should be able to retrieve the doves and place them safely back into the cage.

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  Dance the money dance. The money dance is a very old custom that originally served as a measure of a family's status within a community, but today it is practiced as a way of giving the happy couple a prosperous start. Once the music starts playing, family members or designated people start off the dance by placing money crowns, sashes or leis on the bride and groom.

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  Approach either the bride or groom and, using adhesive tape, place any number of bills that you wish onto the happy couple's clothing. Pins were traditionally used to attach the money, but many brides prefer that their gown not be pinned. The dance can continue for as long as the couple wants or until guests stop approaching the couple.

Tips & Warnings

- If you plan to incorporate any of these customs, make sure guests unfamiliar with Filipino wedding customs are open to new cultural experiences.
- Include descriptions of the customs in your wedding programs to help those unfamiliar with the customs understand what's happening and the symbolism of the events.

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