



- Wedding Traditions -

> Raining Rice

The first wedding confetti were grains thrown to ensure the bride's fruitfulness. Early Romans tossed seeds and nuts while the Greeks preferred nuts, dates, and seed-bearing plants. The French traditionally tossed wheat at the bridal couple, Sicilians threw wheat, bread and salt, while the English tossed pieces of cake. In some parts of England, a slightly different custom arose to ensure the bride's fertility – a plate of salt was smashed over the groom's head! Today's tradition of rice throwing originated in the Orient where rice denoted fecundity.

- Lady Gyngere

> The Bridal Bouquet

The first bridal bouquets consisted of herbs, greens, and wildflowers designed to protect against evil spirits jealous of the bride's happiness. Elizabethan brides carried bouquets with such savories as mint for sexual arousal, sesame and parsley for fertility, sweet basil for good luck, and garlic and chives, whose aroma would not only ward off the evil eye but jealous guests as well.

The orange blossom – today's bouquet item of choice – made its debut in Medieval Europe by the Crusaders. Legend has it that a simple gardener to the King of Spain cultivated a rare orange tree in the King's garden. Although this tree was admired by all, the King would not part with even the smallest branch, as he was extremely proud of its exotic nature. When the gardener's daughter wanted to marry, she possessed no dowry, so one evening she slipped into the king's garden and stole a cutting from his prized tree. The next morning she was able to sell the cutting, used the money for her dowry and lived happily ever after. The orange tree symbolizes chastity, fertility, and love, for its unique ability to bloom in all seasons and to bear fruit while it's flowering.

> The Bouquet toss

The tradition of the bouquet toss stems from early days in England when the bride was considered to transmit good fortune. Guests would fight for bits of the bride's clothing, flowers, or headpiece to share in the good fortune. Out of self-defense, the bride began to throw her bouquet.



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➤ The Garter toss

The wedding garter is a tradition that dates back to the 17th and 18th centuries. In those days, the garter was a silk sash tied below the bride's knee. During the celebration, it was considered a trophy for the groomsman who was able to capture the garter from the bride; he would then wear it in his hat for the remainder of the celebration.

➤ The Bridal Group (party)

To confuse the evil spirits, the **bridesmaids** traditionally dress similar to the bride, and the groomsmen similar to the **groom**, to confuse evil spirits that might want to harm the couple. At one time, 10 attendants were required. It was thought that the spirits would not be able to discern the bride and grooms from the attendants due to the similar dress, and thus the evil spirits would be thwarted.

➤ The Honey Moon

Few know that the term "honeymoon" is a specific reference to mead, originating from a medieval English tradition that after any wedding ceremony, nuptial couples were given a month's supply of mead, enough for one full cycle of the moon. It was believed that by faithfully drinking mead for the first month, the bride would "bear fruit" and a child would be born within the year. If, indeed, the woman conceived, success was attributed to the skill of the mead maker. The ability to produce life was believed to be inspired through the indulgence of the gods who gave humans access to the dew of heaven: honey, for their mead.

- from "Mad About Mead" by Pamela Spence

➤ Tradition of the Bridal Shower

Today's brides-to-be have a young 17th century Dutch maiden to thank for their showers. The girl fell in love with a miller who could not afford to marry because of his practice of giving flour away to the indigent left him without sufficient means. Neighbors and friends took pity on the good-hearted couple and conspired to "shower" her with gifts of household goods and furnishings so that her father would consent to the marriage.



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➤ Wedding Dreams

- * To dream of sage means that you will marry.
- * To dream of a wreath of flowers means a new love.
- * To dream of a basket of flowers indicates a birth or a wedding.
- * To dream of clover means a happy and prosperous marriage.
- * To dream of myrtle-blossom means a wedding is to occur.
- * To dream of forget-me-nots indicates that you will soon find a new love.
- * To dream of violets means that your spouse will be younger than yourself.

- From "Garden Spells" by Claire Nahmad

➤ Wedding Rings History

We are all probably familiar with the fact that wedding rings, or "circles", symbolized perfection, perfect unity with no beginning and no end. For some it represents holiness, perfection and peace, as well as the sun, earth and universe. You may even be aware that it was once believed that the third finger of the left hand had a special vein, "vena amoris" or "the vein of love", running directly to the wearers heart. And it is from this romantic custom that we today have the custom of placing wedding rings on this finger.

Ancient Egyptians believed that unbroken circular rings insured eternal love and devotion. **Wedding Rings** were placed on the third finger of the left hand because it was thought that the vein in that finger ran directly to the heart.