

# Bridesmaid frequently asked questions

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Bridesmaids are an important part of a wedding, and their role is largely defined by tradition. Whether you are the bride or a first time bridesmaid, you may have some questions about what being a bridesmaid is all about. To help set things straight, here are answers to the most frequently asked questions about bridesmaids.

## **Who should be a bridesmaid and how many should there be?**

The bridesmaids should be the women to whom the bride feels closest. If she has a sister, then she should definitely be included in the bridal party, even if the bride is not best friends with her, as it would be an insult not to ask her. It is not necessary to ask friends to be bridesmaids just because you were in their wedding party, unless you would have invited that particular person to stand up for you anyway. As to the right number, it depends in part on the size of the wedding. A minimum of one is usual, up to about five or six for an average size wedding. If your wedding will be very large (say over 200 guests), feel free to have up to seven or eight bridesmaids if you have that many dear friends. On the other hand, for weddings under around 80 guests, limit the bridal party to three or fewer bridesmaids.

## **What does a bridesmaid do, exactly?**

The main function of a bridesmaid is to show up on the day of the wedding in the designated apparel and be a part of the wedding processional and recessional. She is expected to be cheerful and upbeat, both at the ceremony and reception. Bridesmaids are also expected to attend a rehearsal before the wedding and the rehearsal dinner afterwards. It is customary for bridesmaids to throw or at least attend a bridal shower, but it is not mandatory. Repeat, brides, bridesmaids do not have to host a bridal shower, though many will choose to. If the bridesmaids live near the bride, they may also assist her with wedding planning, especially shopping for the bridal gown.

## **What does a bridesmaid have to pay for?**

In general, it is expected that bridesmaids will pay for their own dresses and accessories, although the bride will often give them their bridesmaid jewelry as a gift. Bridesmaids are usually responsible for their own travel costs, although the bride should try to find a spot for them in someone's guest room whenever possible. Bridesmaids will also give a wedding gift to the bride and groom, either individually or as a group. A bridesmaid should also plan to give the bride a bridal shower gift. Though normally only people who can attend the shower would bring a present, the bridesmaid who cannot attend any showers will probably want to send a gift to the hostess to give to the bride during the party.

## **What are the bride's responsibilities towards her bridesmaids?**

First and foremost, the bride should remember that bridesmaids are friends, not indentured servants. They should also attempt to find a dress that all of the bridesmaids will like and can afford. Brides should always give their attendants a special bridesmaid gift, such as jewelry or a silver keepsake. A very nice custom is for the bride to host a ladies' luncheon a few days before the wedding to thank all of her bridesmaids and the mothers of the bride and groom for their friendship and support.

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