

RESEARCH

American couples spending more money, time on wedding planning: report

June 12, 2023



The country's soon-to-be-weds' spending habits and globally most-extensive planning periods make the U.S. especially noteworthy for luxury's top vendors, designers and venues. Image credit: Fairmont

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

In the United States, engaged people are increasingly putting more time and resources into their big day.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

According to the [2023 Global Wedding Report](#), compiled by media and technology company The Knot, American weddings are the most expensive in the world, costing at least 30.4 percent more than the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy. The country's soon-to-be-weds' spending habits and globally most-extensive planning periods make the U.S. especially noteworthy for luxury's top vendors, designers and venues.

"The wedding industry was resilient throughout COVID-19 and bounced back quicker than most expected, but that doesn't mean it was unchanged," said Tim Chi, CEO of The Knot Worldwide.

"Weddings look different than they did before and during the pandemic, which is why we're calling 2023 the year of transformation," Mr. Chi said. "We found that after spending time apart from family and friends, celebration is more important than ever and couples are creating new ways to wow their guests.

"Our findings underscore the need to evolve to keep pace with today's couples."

The report was compiled based on an annual newlywed survey conducted between December 2022 and February 2023 by The Knot Worldwide (The Knot, WeddingWire and Bodas.net) to those with a registered email address and married in 2022 spanning 15 countries, 25,245 responded. Ad hoc studies and wedding stories shared by volunteer couples with The Knot Worldwide are also included.

Ring it up

Though American weddings are not the largest in terms of guests, they are proving to be by far the largest in terms of their accompanying price tag.

Ranked as the most expensive in the world, weddings in the country cost \$30,000 on average. The U.K., Spain and Italy all jointly ranked in second place, amounting to \$23,000 each.



Average attendance at U.S. weddings sits at 117, making them the fourth-biggest of the studied countries when it comes to headcount. Image credit: St. Regis

While the gap between the U.S. and the second most expensive countries is respectable with its 30.4 percent lead on the three nations, compared to the third place rankings, Canada and France, U.S. weddings cost at least 57.9 percent more when it comes to Argentina, home to the least expensive weddings on the list, that number grows to 650 percent.

This could explain the longer period in which it takes Americans to plan their weddings.

Both U.S. and U.K. couples spend on average 15 to 16 months researching before their milestone moment. In contrast, the French spend 13 to 14 months, and those living in Spain, Portugal, Italy and Brazil spend 11 months to a year.

Most of the longest-planning countries also report higher rates of couples living together before marriage, with between 91 percent and 78 percent choosing to do so.

Additionally, about 66 percent of couples worldwide state that they had a set, formal proposal, meaning that rather than deciding mutually to get married, one of the people in the relationship made the traditional gesture. Many are opting to shop for rings together ([see story](#)).



Around the world, couples are democratizing their relationships, increasingly moving to decide together when to get engaged. Image credit: Selfridges

In France, which ranked the highest proportion of couples sharing a home before tying the knot, getting down on one knee is least likely to happen now, only 43 percent of French couples do so, down from 79 percent in 2019.

All of this is to say that traditional structures of weddings are shifting among couples ([see story](#)) of the highest-spending nations, including the U.S. They are dating longer, spending more and phasing out what used to be considered key relationship milestones before they say "I do."

Getting dressed

Certain luxury vendors are particularly well-positioned for American weddings.

During the lengthening planning period, couples are especially focused on finding the most ideal wedding dress, with 93 percent saying it is their top vendor priority. This makes the U.S. the only country that does not put photography on top; it came in second.



Americans are engaging in "first looks" at growing rates, with 55 percent of respondents choosing to do so, making the stated vendor priority of a wedding dress all the more relevant. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

Groom attire, catering and cake vendors came in third, fourth and fifth place, respectively, for those in the nation.

The enthusiasm the demographic has for wedding dresses demonstrates that there is room to grow in the fashion category, luxury having an ideal opportunity to step in with wedding options, specifically made with Americans in mind.

© 2023 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.