

# 12



## Global Wedding Trends

**WARM-UP:** How do your family and friends celebrate weddings?  
What wedding traditions do you enjoy most?

*Married:* Describe how you celebrated your wedding.

*Single:* Describe what you think is an ideal wedding.

### Useful Vocabulary

dramatically	economy	social	destination	arranged
religious	newlywed	attitude	splurge	mismatch
civil	wedlock	ceremony	all-inclusive	cross-cultural

### Weddings East & West

### READING

Europe: According to a 2015 publication in *The Guardian*, Marriage rates have fallen dramatically in most major European countries after the turn of the century. In Italy there were fewer than 200,000 marriages in 2013, the lowest number since the First World War. Numbers have fallen by 50% since 1965. According to Italy's National Institute of Statistics, "The cultural causes are that marriage has become less important from a religious and civil point of view." It is more socially acceptable for young people to live together without marrying.

Read the article and discuss.



Fig. 12a: European Couple

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are marriage rates falling in your country too? What are some reasons for falling marriage rates?
2. Has marriage become less important to young people in your community? Is it socially acceptable for young couples to live together without being married?

A slowing economy in Europe has also impacted marriage rates because young couples cannot afford to have an expensive wedding. In 2015, the average age of newlywed men in Spain was 37.2 years. That is almost 10 years higher than it was in the 1980s. The number of children now born out of wedlock in Poland is at its highest level (21%), suggesting significant shifts in social attitudes.

RECOMMENDED VIDEO



Discovery News  
Why Is Everyone Waiting To Get Married?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

3. Does the cost of weddings deter young couples in your community from getting married? Which of the following items do you think are necessary at a wedding?

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Clothing        | <input type="checkbox"/> Flowers         | <input type="checkbox"/> Honeymoon     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Photos     | <input type="checkbox"/> Live Music      | <input type="checkbox"/> Food & Drinks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelry (wedding rings) | <input type="checkbox"/> Scenic Location | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding Gifts |

4. Is it socially acceptable to have children out of wedlock in your country?

**North America:** While many Europeans seem to be avoiding big ceremonies to save money, more and more North Americans are splurging on destination weddings. A 2014 survey of 17,500 brides across the US showed that 24% of couples are opting to get



Fig. 12b: Destination Wedding

married in a location far from home. Part of the reason for this is the growing number and quality of all-inclusive resorts offering full wedding packages in Mexico and the Caribbean, which have competitive prices compared with wedding venues in America and Canada.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

5. Would you ever consider a destination wedding? If so, where would you want to go (beach, mountains, city, countryside, historic site, etc)

6. Destination weddings decrease the number of guests that can attend; do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

7. Has this trend caught on in your community or among people you know?

**East Asia:** This region has had a long standing culture of arranged marriages, in which the bride and groom may meet for the first time at the wedding based on matchmaking done by parents, and other family members. And although this practice is far less common in modern times, one interesting micro culture of arranged marriage, called the “Moonies”, cropped up in South Korea during the 1990s. Thousands of couples have participated in mass wedding ceremonies hosted by the Korean Unification Church, led by Moon Sun Myung.



Fig. 12c: Mass Wedding Ceremony

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

8. Do you have a positive or negative perception of arranged marriage?
9. Do you think you could trust your parents to choose a good spouse for you? Would you like to choose a spouse for your children?

Moon, who taught that romantic love led to mismatched couples, personally matched many of the couples, some of whom had met just days before their wedding. Moon's preference for cross-cultural marriages also meant that couples often shared no common language. In 1997, 30,000 couples tied the knot in Washington, and two years later around 21,000 couples filled the Olympic Stadium in Seoul.



Fig. 12d: Reverend Moon Sun Myung

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

10. What do you think about “Moonies”? Is this a good way to meet a spouse? Will these marriages be healthier than couples who met in other ways (such as through work, school, or friends)?
11. Would you ever consider getting married (or allowing your child to get married) with someone from a different culture? Are there benefits to having a cross-cultural marriage?

## USEFUL PHRASES

“And although this practice is far less common in modern times, one interesting micro culture of arranged marriage **cropped up** in South Korea...”

☞ “**to crop up**” (*verb phrase*): to appear, occur, or come to one’s notice unexpectedly

EXAMPLE: An urgent problem has **cropped up** so I need to leave the meeting early today.

QUESTION: Have any new restaurants **cropped up** in your neighborhood?

“In 1997, 30,000 couples **tied the knot** in Washington, and two years later around 21,000 couples filled the Olympic Stadium in Seoul.”

☞ “**to tie the knot**” (*informal expression*): to get married

EXAMPLE: I would not recommend **tying the knot** with someone you just met yesterday.

QUESTION: How long do you think a couple should date before they **tie the knot**?