

Overnight Wedding Reception Ideas

Some brides these days are turning wedding receptions on their head and creating super long receptions that run through the night and into the morning. If this is you, planning some activities for those long nighttime hours is essential.

Generally, if an all-night reception is planned, it goes something like this: the wedding is held in the early evening and reception follows. By about midnight, many of the guests will have left and the group that is remaining (generally the younger guests, but not always) will continue to dance and party and revel into the early morning hours. At some point, breakfast will be provided and everyone will go home to crash.

Why do you need activities for such a reception? The answer is simple. You want to keep people entertained through the nighttime hours, you want to keep them at the reception and not let them give in to driving home to crash and sleep and you want to provide them with a real party. Let's face it: if they are willing to hang in with you for the duration, they deserve something for their effort.

First, you need to be fairly organized about the activities you plan. Consult with your DJ about these activities and leave it to him or her to keep things on a schedule. Do not plan to cut cake in the middle of the night. That activity should take place during the more traditional evening hours, so those not intending to stay all night can leave. However, if you're determined to keep your guests all night, you could hold one activity back with the hope it will keep guests in the house longer.

Depending on your guest list, you might hold off on the father-daughter dance until after midnight, or you could save a few toasts for the late night hours. In any event, having some other fun events is a great idea.

As guests begin to fade, bring in a piñata, which you can find shaped like a wedding ring, a bridal dress or a champagne flute. Fill it with a variety of goodies. Candy is always popular, but you could also fill it with silly toys found in the carnival section of the party store. Have the DJ play a spirited song and let everyone have a chance at the piñata. Do this on the dance floor and really let people have a swing at it. There should be plenty of room. Once the piñata breaks, everyone can enjoy a taste of sweet candy or can enjoy some silly little carnival game or toy.

People who stay for the duration of the wedding are going to need a rest. Plan a photo presentation or video viewing for this purpose. You could have someone who's familiar with PowerPoint create a photo presentation or have someone put

together a video of photos. Do this around 2 or 3 am and have it last a good half hour to 45 minutes. This gives everyone a chance to sit down and relax and also gives the DJ a chance to sit, have a rest and rejuvenate for the next round.

In that same vein of allowing the guests a little relaxation, one activity that some brides employ is a non-activity. If the wedding is outside, you can provide inflatable mattresses and have some torches lit. If guests want to sit down and relax, they can do so on the mattresses and still be part of the activity while resting. If it's been a long day and someone needs to rest, those reception room chairs don't seem the most comfortable. If the reception is indoors, think about providing large pillows for guests to sit on or create a corner with inflatable mattresses and lots of fabric. This can be a chatting area where people can go to rest but still be part of the fun. They can chat and catch up with other guests and then head back for more partying when they're rejuvenated.

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