

Weddings: reading

Olga: I had two weddings days! The first was a civil wedding in the city hall and then, two days later, I had another wedding in a church! In _____ everybody must have a civil ceremony, and a lot of couples choose to have a church wedding as well. After the civil wedding there was a small party with close friends and family, and in the evening we had the *Polterabend*. People brought old porcelain, you know plates, cups and things like that, and they threw them on the ground in front of my new husband and me. Of course everything broke and there was lots of noise and laughing! We had to sweep up the broken pieces together, but this symbolized that nothing would get broken in our new house again while we lived together, and is meant to bring good luck. So far it's worked!



Manuela: For me the most beautiful part of the wedding was the candle ceremony. In _____ this is a traditional custom. After giving each other rings the bride and groom have to light a candle each. I lit the candle on my right which represented the bride, and my husband lit the candle on his left which represented the groom. We then used these two candles to light a third candle in the middle, and then we blew out the first two candles. So there was just one candle alight and this symbolized that we were now the same body and we were going to share every moment of our lives together. I was so happy I cried!

Meryem: My wedding, which began with separate celebrations for my family and the groom's family, lasted five days. During this time we, my husband-to-be and me, weren't allowed to see each other. Then on the day of the wedding ceremony my girlfriends took my shoes away from me! With a lot of giggling they wrote their names inside the shoes and then gave them back. After the ceremony I took my shoes off and looked at the names. In _____ if one of the names is rubbed off and can't be read anymore it means that this person is going to get married next. When I looked in my shoes I saw that my sister's name had disappeared, and guess what? She got married six months later!

Noshilu: As we grow older, unmarried women can wear more and more jewellery but nothing beats the colourful, beaded necklace that is worn by _____ women on their wedding day! As is the tradition my necklace was made by my mother and was presented to me by my father. It was very elaborate and went down to my knees. I wore all my necklaces, earrings and ornaments that day and in fact it was a little tricky to walk. My husband collected me from my parents' home and took me to his home where I received gifts of cattle. Along with other clothing I now wear a blue cloth which symbolizes being a married woman.

Lin: In _____ red is the most important colour for our wedding ceremonies. For us it symbolizes love, joy and prosperity. Although a lot of brides wear white these days my wedding gown was the traditional red, and so were the invitations I sent out to our guests. Before I was married my husband's family came to my family's home with

wedding gifts in red baskets. These contained, among other things, personal items for me. Before the evening party started my husband and I went to a nearby park and had a video made. We also exchanged handkerchiefs and wished each other good luck. Each handkerchief had a picture of a mandarin duck on because they symbolize faithfulness as ducks always stay together. And the colour of the hankies? Why, red of course!

Barbara: My wedding day was completely unplanned and unexpected! We were on holiday in Las Vegas and having a great time when my husband, my boyfriend at the time, proposed. We had been together a few years and loved each other very much so I accepted. I was then very surprised when he said he wanted to get married there and then in Las Vegas! I wasn't too sure but he was so enthusiastic that I agreed. During the few hours before the wedding, which was in a tiny chapel, I had to find "something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue" to wear at the ceremony! That's a tradition we have in _____. Old and new were easy, I borrowed a scarf from a friend and my husband gave me a beautiful sapphire ring. The holiday then became our honeymoon!