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| **Budgeting for a Wedding****Millennials planning a wedding are often contending with monthly expenses, student loan repayments, and saving for retirement. Read on for tips on how to formulate an affordable wedding budget without overspending.**A wedding is a major life event that often includes many big-ticket purchases. A realistic budget and a little discipline can go a long way to keeping expenses from breaking the bank, allowing you to save for other important items.**Assemble your budget.** Start by deciding how much you can afford to spend. Talk with your parents and relatives to see how much they are willing to contribute. Next, list your priorities, reducing or eliminating expenses that are less important to you. For example, you might not want to spend money on a live band or a five-star meal. Do your research on what standard items cost, such as photography and flowers. You can speak to several vendors to get a range of costs, while eliciting ideas that will keep costs reasonable. Leave a little wiggle room in your budget for lastminute expenses.**Be a savvy spender.** Timing can make a big difference in costs. You can save money by scheduling your wedding in April and May rather than June. Also consider October and early November, but avoid holidays, when travel and hotel rooms are at their costliest. Also, consider regional weather patterns, such as hurricane season. You can save money on your wedding dress and accessories by shopping at sample sales, trunk shows, and other events. Check with florists for ways to save money on flowers, such as double-purposing bridesmaid bouquets as table centerpieces.**DIY saves big bucks.** If you are lucky enough to have willing friends and relatives, enlist them for jobs that would otherwise require significant spending. For example, plan the event yourself, perhaps with the help of a family member or friend who has experience. Perhaps your circle of friends includes ace bakers, cooks, videographers, or musicians. Ceremony and reception venues can be awfully expensive, but a friend’s home might serve just as well. If you keep things casual, you won’t need to spend a lot on fancy duds and meals.**Use credit responsibly.** If you can plan your wedding well in advance, you can use the time to set aside special savings that will reduce your need to use your credit cards. Speaking of credit cards, you may want to apply for one that has a 0% APR promotion for new cardmembers. Also, many cards offer a cash or mileage bonus when you spend a minimum amount during the first three months after opening the account. That bonus helps reduce your net costs for the wedding or honeymoon.**Work with a financial professional to keep things real.** Your wedding budget exists within the larger context of your short- and long-term financial needs. By incorporating important life events into your overall financial plans, you can draw up a balanced wedding budget that won’t blow a hole in your retirement savings or debt level. Contact me today to schedule a review of your financial plans–together, we can arrive at a wedding spending limit that won’t leave you with a financial hangover.

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